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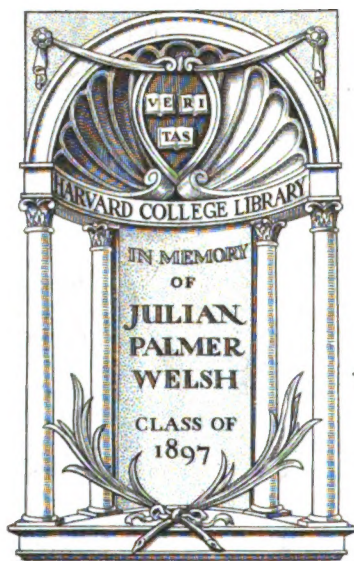
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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XIX

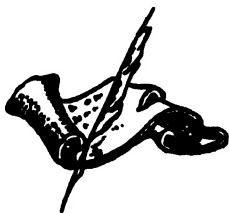
oetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XIX

October-March, 1921-1922

Edited by
Harriet Monroe



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CHICAGO

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

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Three annual prizes will be awarded as usual next November for good work of the current year. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the ninth time; to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the eighth time, a prize of one hundred dollars; and to the Friday Club of Chicago, which has donated fifty dollars for a prize to a young poet.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME XIX

VERSE

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Aber, Loureine:</i> | |
| FROM CITY LANES: | |
| City Wed | 10 |
| If, Elevator Man, Bereft | 12 |
| Old Man | 12 |
| Girl, Death | 13 |
| <i>Addison, Medora C.:</i> | |
| Motherhood | 261 |
| <i>Andelson, Pearl:</i> | |
| FROM A BAY-WINDOW: | |
| Autumn Rain, Steeples | 133 |
| Portrait of an Old Lady | 133 |
| To a Dead Love, To Felix, April Snow, Solace | 134 |
| Beach Song, Song on Death, Out of a Cavalcade of Dust | 135 |
| <i>Baker, Karle Wilson:</i> | |
| THREE SMALL POEMS: | |
| To Get Wisdom, Meekness and Pride, Courage | 16 |
| Not in the Whirlwind | 17 |
| <i>Bellemann, Henry:</i> | |
| POEMS: | |
| Gargoyles of Notre Dame | 85 |
| Edges, Lullaby | 86 |
| Peaks, God | 87 |
| The Artist | 89 |
| <i>Bishop, Morris:</i> | |
| Ecclesiastes | 314 |
| A New Hampshire Boy | 315 |
| <i>Brown, Sarah-Margaret:</i> | |
| From a Chicago "L" | 251 |
| <i>Buchanan, Alison:</i> | |
| The Unloved | 313 |
| <i>Buss, Kate:</i> | |
| Gargoyle | 77 |
| <i>Butts, Dorothy:</i> | |
| THE PASSERS-BY: | |
| The Parade | 80 |
| To the Hills Around Northampton | 80 |
| A Vanity, Audience | 81 |
| Listening, May Basket | 82 |
| The Transient, Difference | 83 |
| Please | 84 |
| <i>Bynner, Witter (Translator):</i> | |
| POEMS BY WANG WEI: | |
| Answering Vice-prefect Chang, Bound Home to Mount Sung | 235 |
| A Message to P'ai Ti, On the Way to the Temple | 236 |
| Mount Chung-nan, A View of the Han River | 237 |
| In my Lodge at Wang-ch'uan after a Long Rain | 237 |
| My Retreat at Chung-nan | 238 |
| In a Retreat Among Bamboos, Lines | 238 |
| A Parting, A Song at Wei-ch'eng | 239 |
| The Beautiful Hsi-shih | 239 |
| A Song of Young Girls from Lo-yang | 240 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Harmonizing a Poem by Palace-attendant Kuo | 241 |
| A Green Stream | 241 |
| <i>Carnegie, Emanuel:</i> | |
| NEURIAD: | |
| Lake | 139 |
| Sleep, Aubade | 140 |
| Encounter, Sermon | 141 |
| Hope, Insomnia, Smoke | 142 |
| Funeral March, Italian Song | 143 |
| Old Accustomed Impudent Ghost | 144 |
| Invocation to Death | 144 |
| <i>Clarke, Harlow:</i> | |
| An Old Woman, I Complain in Passing | 247 |
| <i>Code, Grant H.:</i> | |
| Sea Quatrains I-V | 23 |
| <i>Crawford, Nelson Antrim:</i> | |
| FRAGILITIES: | |
| Song, Lake | 24 |
| Companionship, Impotence, Branches | 25 |
| <i>Crew, Helen Coale:</i> | |
| Irish Song | 192 |
| <i>Curren, Edwin:</i> | |
| The Lions | 59 |
| <i>D., H.:</i> | |
| HESPERIDES: | |
| Fragment XXXVI | 26 |
| Song, At Bala | 29 |
| <i>DeFord, Miriam Allen:</i> | |
| UNDER THE CLIFF: | |
| Shadow Canyon | 18 |
| Themes, Will It be like This? | 19 |
| <i>De la Mare, Walter:</i> | |
| The Hostage | 124 |
| <i>Deutsch, Babetta:</i> | |
| Tak for Sidet | 259 |
| <i>Dow, Dorothy:</i> | |
| HANDFUL OF ASHES: | |
| The Captive | 130 |
| Waiting, Futility | 131 |
| Bound | 132 |
| <i>Dresbach, Glenn Ward:</i> | |
| Songs of the Plains I-IV | 187 |
| <i>Driscoll, Louise:</i> | |
| Keep My Hand | 17 |
| <i>Flexner, Hortense:</i> | |
| Holiday Crowd, Winged Victory | 317 |
| <i>Frost, Robert:</i> | |
| The Witch of Coös | 175 |
| <i>Galahad, Joseph Andrew:</i> | |
| Sic Passim | 20 |
| Recalled | 22 |
| <i>Garnett, Louise Ayres:</i> | |
| RESURGAM: | |
| I: Birth | 117 |
| II: Life | 118 |
| III: Death | 119 |
| IV: Rebirth | 122 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Grannis, Anita:</i> | |
| A Fillet of Thorn | 75 |
| <i>Harwood, Ruth:</i> | |
| WORKING-HOUR SONGS: | |
| The Shoe Factory | 310 |
| Making Little Clothes, Always and Always | 312 |
| <i>Haste, Gwendolen:</i> | |
| IN THE OFFICE: | |
| The Guardians, Aileen | 260 |
| <i>Janson, Ellen Margaret:</i> | |
| TABLEAUX: | |
| Scherzo, Tryst | 196 |
| Incense Smoke | 197 |
| Night in the City | 198 |
| The Unknown | 199 |
| <i>Johnson, Fenton:</i> | |
| TWO NEGRO SPIRITUALS: | |
| A Dream | 128 |
| The Wonderful Morning | 129 |
| <i>Kesley, Dorothy:</i> | |
| On the Wing | 193 |
| <i>Kiang Kang-ku (Translator of Wang Wei). See Witter Bynner</i> | 235 |
| <i>Lee, Agnes:</i> | |
| The Jilt I-VI | 69 |
| The Blunted Age | 71 |
| <i>McCreary, Frederick R.:</i> | |
| HILLSIDE POEMS: | |
| Winter Rain, A Naked Maple | 255 |
| Noontime, Judges | 256 |
| Alone on the Hill | 257 |
| <i>Mesher, Marjorie:</i> | |
| SONGS OF NIGHT: | |
| Ode to Myself Trying to Sleep | 182 |
| In Darkness, By a Window | 183 |
| Song for a May Night | 184 |
| Color of Water, Lonely Sky and Sea | 185 |
| Comrades | 186 |
| <i>Monro, Harold:</i> | |
| Fate I-II | 252 |
| <i>Monroe, Harriet:</i> | |
| Supernal Dialogue | 125 |
| <i>North, Jessica Nelson:</i> | |
| The Wages of Sin | 76 |
| <i>Norton, Grace Fallow:</i> | |
| TWO POEMS: | |
| I Shall Remember | 190 |
| Shy Perfect Flower | 191 |
| <i>Peyton, John R. C.:</i> | |
| Geyser | 77 |
| <i>Reynolds, Julie R.:</i> | |
| To Sappho | 191 |
| <i>Ruble, Esther Louise:</i> | |
| First Snow | 186 |
| <i>Ryan, Kathryn White:</i> | |
| Fog | 76 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Sandburg, Carl:</i> | |
| MEDLEY OF POEMS: | |
| Moon-riders I-III | 295 |
| Feather Lights | 298 |
| The Naked Stranger | 298 |
| Medley | 299 |
| Gypsy Mother | 301 |
| <i>Simons, Hi:</i> | |
| INCIDENTALS: | |
| Dust In the Road, Taps, The Star | 258 |
| Portrait of an old Roué | 259 |
| <i>Skinner, Constance Lindsay:</i> | |
| Winter Dawn | 248 |
| <i>Smith, Maurine:</i> | |
| POEMS: | |
| Joy, Ceremony, First Comer | 14 |
| Wind, Swallows Brush a Pool | 15 |
| <i>Speyer, Leonora:</i> | |
| In Praise of Abrigada | 242 |
| <i>Stevens, Wallace:</i> | |
| SUR MA GUZZLA GRACILE: | |
| Palace of the Babies | 1 |
| From the Misery of Don Joost | 2 |
| The Doctor of Geneva, Gubbinal | 3 |
| The Snow Man | 4 |
| Tea at the Palaz of Hoon, The Cuban Doctor | 5 |
| Another Weeping Woman | 6 |
| Of the Manner of Addressing Clouds | 7 |
| Of Heaven Considered as a Tomb | 7 |
| The Load of Sugar-cane | 8 |
| Hibiscus on the Sleeping Shores | 9 |
| <i>Strobel, Marion:</i> | |
| SONG SKETCHES: | |
| We Have a Day | 303 |
| Spring Morning | 304 |
| Tonight, The Silence Stirs Again | 305 |
| The Night | 306 |
| I Would Pretend, Admonition | 307 |
| Frightened Face, Daily Prayer | 308 |
| L'Envoi | 309 |
| <i>Tanaquil, Paul:</i> | |
| Semper Eadem | 138 |
| The Lover | 261 |
| <i>Tietjens, Eunice:</i> | |
| Fire | 262 |
| <i>Unna, Sarah:</i> | |
| Roads | 316 |
| <i>Untermeyer, Jean Starr:</i> | |
| From the Day-book of a Forgotten Prince | 74 |
| <i>Untermeyer, Louis:</i> | |
| Monologue from a Mattress | 318 |
| <i>Vail, Lawrence:</i> | |
| Grey Crust | 136 |
| <i>Waldron, Winifred:</i> | |
| Arpeggio | 138 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Walsh, Ernest: | |
| FOUR POEMS: | |
| I Ask for a Friend, Sonnet | 194 |
| The Fickle Lover, Collapae | 195 |
| Wang Wei (See Witter Bynner) | |
| Wilkinson, Florence: | |
| Don Juan in Portugal | 78 |
| Williams, William Carlos: | |
| POEMS: | |
| Wild Orchard | 200 |
| The Lonely Street | 201 |
| Spouts, The Widow's Lament in Springtime | 202 |
| Zolinsky, Henry Saul: | |
| TWO POEMS: | |
| Will Power, Pain | 137 |

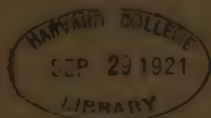
PROSE

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-----|
| Poetry and the Allied Arts | H. M. | 31 |
| Influence of the Art-theatre on Poetic Drama | Cloyd Head | 37 |
| REVIEWS: | | |
| Museum Ships | Isidor Schneider | 44 |
| <i>Ships in Harbor</i> , by David Morton | | |
| New Fire | Glenway Wescott | 47 |
| <i>A Canopic Jar</i> , by Leonora Speyer | | |
| Pageantry and Rhetoric | Laura Sherry | 51 |
| <i>Rip Van Winkle</i> , by Percy Mackaye | | |
| <i>Two Mothers (Eight Hundred Rubles and Agrippina)</i> , by John G. Neihardt | | |
| The Novelist as Poet | N. A. C. | 53 |
| <i>As the Wind Blows</i> , by Eden Philpotts | | |
| The Professor as Critic | Nelson Antrim Crawford | 54 |
| <i>The Function of the Poet and Other Essays</i> , by James Russell Lowell | | |
| <i>The Kinds of Poetry and Other Essays</i> , by John Erskine | | |
| From Queen Anne to George the Fifth | H. M. | 90 |
| REVIEWS: | | |
| Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright | Laura Sherry | 94 |
| <i>Poems, Mary Stuart, and Poems</i> , by John Drinkwater | | |
| Of Dreams and Stitches | Pearl Andelson | 100 |
| <i>Curtains</i> , by Hazel Hall | | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | | |
| Poet and Composer as Allies | Louise Ayres Garnett | 102 |
| Reactionary Composers | Kay Boyle | 104 |
| Announcement of Awards | | 107 |
| OUR CONTEMPORARIES: | | |
| A New "Youth" | | 115 |
| Renewal of Youth | H. M. | 146 |
| Alexander Blok | Glenway Wescott | 149 |
| REVIEWS: | | |
| A Flourish of Trumpets | Marion Strobel | 151 |
| <i>Second April</i> , by Edna St. Vincent Millay | | |
| Fletcherian Colors | Laura Sherry | 155 |
| <i>Breakers and Granite</i> , by John Gould Fletcher | | |

| | PAGE |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Minor Chords | Isidor Schneider 158 |
| <i>Blissions</i> , by Marguerite Wilkinson | |
| <i>Selected Poems</i> , by Lady Margaret Sackville | |
| Post-martial Emotion | Baker Brownell 162 |
| <i>Auridia and Other Poems</i> , by Robert Nichols | |
| Color Sonatas | Nelson Austin Crawford 163 |
| <i>Poems</i> , by Iris Tree | |
| The Prematurity of Immaturity | Isidor Schneider 167 |
| <i>Hidden Path</i> , by Ned Hungerford | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| The Allied Arts Again I—Charles Albert Case, II—Bertha Wardell | 169 |
| The Hope of Peace | H. M. 204 |
| Must Art be Interesting? | Baker Brownell 206 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| A Symposium on Marianne Moore | H. M. 208 |
| <i>Poems</i> , by Marianne Moore | |
| A Mystic Warrior | Dorothy Dudley 216 |
| <i>The Mystic Warrior</i> , by James Oppenheim | |
| Mrs. Wylie's Poems | H. M. 220 |
| <i>Nets to Catch the Wind</i> , by Elfinor Wylie | |
| Thoughtful Measures | H. M. 222 |
| <i>Out of Mist</i> , by Florence Kilpatrick Mixer | |
| OUR CONTEMPORARIES: | |
| New International Magazines | 224 |
| Various Prizes | 227 |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| A Letter from Paris | Jean Cailé 229 |
| The Utterance of Poetry | H. M. 266 |
| Translating Wang Wei | Witter Bynner 272 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| A Cool Master | Yvor Winters 278 |
| <i>Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson</i> | |
| Mr. Yeats' Plays | Cloyd Head 288 |
| <i>Four Plays for Dancers</i> , by William Butler Yeats | |
| Newspaper Verse | H. M. 324 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| Miss Lowell's Legends | Dorothy Dudley 330 |
| <i>Legends</i> , by Amy Lowell | |
| Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower | W. Bryher 333 |
| <i>Hymen</i> , by H. D. | |
| "A Distinguished Young Man" | Yvor Winters 337 |
| <i>The Living Friese</i> , by Mark Turbyfill | |
| A Prize-winner | Pearl Anderson 340 |
| <i>Heavens and Earth</i> , by Stephen Vincent Benét | |
| A Lute of One String | H. M. 344 |
| <i>The Lifted Cup</i> , by Jessie B. Rittenhouse | |
| A Poet in Embryo | H. M. 345 |
| <i>Archways of Life</i> , by Mercedes de Acosta | |
| Rhetoric Unashamed | H. M. 346 |
| <i>Ireland Unfreed: Poems of 1921</i> , by Sir William Watson | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| The Code of Minority | Baker Brownell 347 |
| A New Poetry Society | F. P. 351 |
| Notes | 57, 115, 173, 232, 292, 351 |
| Books Received | 58, 116, 174, 233, 293, 352 |

POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XIX

Vol. XIX



No. I

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
October 1921

Sur ma Guzzla Gracile
by Wallace Stevens
Hesperides, by H. D.
From City Lanes
by Loureine Aber
Karle Wilson Baker
Maurine Smith

543 Cass Street, Chicago

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Your June number renewed me wonderfully—an absolutely joyous thing! Go to it, hammer and tongs! Infuse a little beauty, joy, spirit, pain into the life of today. Did I say a little?—Oceans of them!—*A Canadian subscriber*

Vol. XIX

No. I

POETRY for OCTOBER, 1921

| | PAGE |
|---|--------|
| Sur ma Guzzla Gracile <i>Wallace Stevens</i> | 1 |
| Palace of the Babies—Misery of Don Joost—Doctor of Geneva—Gubbinal—Snow Man—Tea at the Palaz of Hoon—Cuban Doctor—Another Weeping Woman—Manner of Addressing Clouds—Of Heaven Considered as a Tomb—The Load of Sugar-Cane—Hibiscus on the Sleeping Shores | |
| From City Lanes <i>Loureine Aber</i> | 10 |
| City Wed—If—Elevator Man—Bereft—Old Man—Girl—Death | |
| Poems <i>Maurine Smith</i> | 14 |
| Joy—Ceremony—First Comer—Wind—Swallows Brush a Pool | |
| Three Small Poems <i>Karle Wilson Baker</i> | 16 |
| To Get Wisdom—Meekness and Pride—Courage | |
| Not in the Whirlwind <i>Karle Wilson Baker</i> | 17 |
| Keep My Hand <i>Louise Driscoll</i> | 17 |
| Under the Cliff <i>Miriam Allen deFord</i> | 18 |
| Shadow Canyon—Themes—Will it be Like This? | |
| Sic Passim—Recalled <i>Joseph Andrew Galahad</i> | 20 |
| Sea Quatrains I-V <i>Grant H. Code</i> | 23 |
| Fragilities <i>Nelson Antrim Crawford</i> | 24 |
| Song—Lake—Companionship—Impotence—Branches | |
| Hesperides <i>H. D.</i> | 26 |
| Fragment XXXVI—Song—At Baia | |
| Poetry and the Allied Arts <i>H. M.</i> | 31 |
| Influence of the Art-theatre on Poetic Drama . . . <i>Cloyd Head</i> | 37 |
| Reviews: | |
| Museum Ships <i>Isidor Schneider</i> | 44 |
| New Fire <i>Glenway Wescott</i> | 47 |
| Pageantry and Rhetoric <i>Laura Sherry</i> | 51 |
| The Novelist as Poet <i>N. A. C.</i> | 53 |
| The Professor as Critic <i>Nelson Antrim Crawford</i> | 54 |
| Notes and Books Received | 57, 58 |

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Doetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX
No. I

OCTOBER 1921

SUR MA GUZZLA GRACILE

PALACE OF THE BABIES

THE disbeliever walked the moonlit place,
Outside of gates of hammered serafin,
Observing the moon-blotches on the walls.

The yellow rocked across the still façades,
Or else sat spinning on the pinnacles,
While he imagined humming sounds and sleep.

The walker in the moonlight walked alone,
And each black window of the building balked
His loneliness and what was in his mind:

[I]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

If in a shimmering room the babies came,
Drawn close by dreams of fledgling wing,
It was because night nursed them in its fold.

Night nursed not him in whose dark mind
The clambering wings of birds of black revolved,
Making harsh torment of the solitude.

The walker in the moonlight walked alone,
And in his heart his disbelief lay cold.
His broad-brimmed hat came close upon his eyes.

FROM THE MISERY OF DON JOOST

I have finished my combat with the sun;
And my body, the old animal,
Knows nothing more.

The powerful seasons bred and killed,
And were themselves the genii
Of their own ends.

Oh, but the very self of the storm
Of sun and slaves, breeding and death,
The old animal—

The senses and feeling, the very sound
And sight, and all there was of the storm—
Knows nothing more.

[2]

Wallace Stevens

THE DOCTOR OF GENEVA

The doctor of Geneva stamped the sand
That lay impounding the Pacific swell,
Patted his stove-pipe hat and tugged his shawl.

Lacustrine man had never been assailed
By such long-rolling opulent cataracts,
Unless Racine or Bossuet held the like.

He did not quail. A man so used to plumb
The multifarious heavens felt no awe
Before these visible, voluble delugings,

Which yet found means to set his simmering mind
Spinning and hissing with oracular
Notations of the wild, the ruinous waste,

Until the steeples of his city clanked and sprang
In an unburgherly apocalypse.
The doctor used his handkerchief and sighed.

GUBBINAL

That strange flower, the sun,
Is just what you say.
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

That tuft of jungle feathers,
That animal eye,
Is just what you say.

That savage of fire,
That seed—
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

THE SNOW MAN

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

Wallace Stevens

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

TEA AT THE PALAZ OF HOON

Not less because in purple I descended
The western day through what you called
The loneliest air, not less was I myself.

What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?
What were the hymns that buzzed beside my ears?
What was the sea whose tide swept through me there?

Out of my mind the golden ointment rained,
And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard.
I was myself the compass of that sea:

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw
Or heard or felt came not but from myself;
And there I found myself more truly and more strange.

THE CUBAN DOCTOR

I went to Egypt to escape
The Indian, but the Indian struck
Out of his cloud and from his sky.

[5]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

This was no worm bred in the moon,
Wriggling far down the phantom air,
And on a comfortable sofa dreamed.

The Indian struck and disappeared.
I knew my enemy was near—I,
Drowsing in summer's sleepest horn.

ANOTHER WEeping WOMAN

Pour the unhappiness out
From your too bitter heart,
Which grieving will not sweeten.

Poison grows in this dark.
It is in the water of tears
Its black blooms rise.

The magnificent cause of being—
The imagination, the one reality
In this imagined world—

Leaves you
With him for whom no phantasy moves,
And you are pierced by a death.

Wallace Stevens

OF THE MANNER OF ADDRESSING CLOUDS

Gloomy grammarians in golden gowns,
Meekly you keep the mortal rendezvous,
Eliciting the still sustaining pomps
Of speech which are like music so profound
They seem an exaltation without sound.
Funest philosophers and ponderers,
Their evocations are the speech of clouds.
So speech of your processions returns
In the casual evocations of your tread
Across the stale, mysterious seasons. These
Are the music of meet resignation; these
The responsive, still sustaining pomps for you
To magnify, if in that drifting waste
You are to be accompanied by more
Than mute bare splendors of the sun and moon.

OF HEAVEN CONSIDERED AS A TOMB

What word have you, interpreters, of men
Who in the tomb of heaven walk by night,
The darkened ghosts of our old comedy?
Do they believe they range the gusty cold,
With lanterns borne aloft to light the way,
Freemen of death, about and still about
To find whatever it is they seek? Or does

[7]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

That burial, pillared up each day as porte
And spiritous passage into nothingness,
Foretell each night the one abysmal night,
When the host shall no more wander, nor the light
Of the steadfast lanterns creep across the dark?
Make hue among the dark comedians,
Halloo them in the topmost distances
For answer from their icy Elysée.

THE LOAD OF SUGAR-CANE

The going of the glade-boat
Is like water flowing;

Like water flowing
Through the green saw-grass,
Under the rainbows;

Under the rainbows
That are like birds,
Turning, bedizened,

While the wind still whistles
As kildeer do,

When they rise
At the red turban
Of the boatman.

Wallace Stevens

HIBISCUS ON THE SLEEPING SHORES

I say now, Fernando, that on that day
The mind roamed as a moth roams,
Among the blooms beyond the open sand;

And that whatever noise the motion of the waves
Made on the sea-weeds and the covered stones
Disturbed not even the most idle ear.

Then it was that that monstered moth
Which had lain folded against the blue
And the colored purple of the lazy sea,

And which had drowsed along the bony shores,
Shut to the blather that the water made,
Rose up besprent and sought the flaming red

Dabbled with yellow pollen—red as red
As the flag above the old café—
And roamed there all the stupid afternoon.

Wallace Stevens

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FROM CITY LANES

*The dawn comes to me sweetly, as a soft new child
Leans with its soul to drain a bit of milk.*

And I am new.

O gray old city,

*Lift your head a moment from the pots and streets—
Wash over me your meaning as a flask of fire
Tipped and spilled over at the altar's base.*

*There are new augurings that go in blue-gray smoke
Up from your shops,
New lips that rain a torrent in me as of words.
Be still a moment, city, while the dawn tells tales.*

CITY WED

I lie by the bricks at night—
Do you think I am lying by you,
And this is your breast I lean against?
No. Bricks are my lord—
With them I shall procreate,
Until I wake some morning with my litter of stone.

Not that I want to lie with bricks,
O beloved of the white limbs and strong neck!
But how can I help it when they come tumbling—
These bricks that come fumbling
At my breast?

IF

If it were not for this dream upon me,
I should make my coin;
I should grind my way to fortune with the little wheels,
I should count the flying heels my slaves to bind,
I should count the eardrums and the fingers mine. . . .
But I keep thinking I can touch the sky
With my lips.

ELEVATOR MAN

You in your little cage and I in mine,
Elevator man,
We will pierce the wide world's heaven
Far as we can:
You to go up and down, beating up and down;
I to brush my wings off
On the walls of Merchant Town.

BEREFT

O my country,
I am crying to you piteously as a hungry bird,
I am crying to you for your beautiful ports
And harbors,
For the slow beauty of your Statue and its silent hope.
O my country, I would slink into the crevices of your
egoism,
And squat on the doormat of your excellences.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

But what shall I do when mad spring comes,
And blossoms come,
And wild sap comes—
But my lover comes not?

O my country, I might be a thin thread in your flag,
Or the little wind blowing your ships to sea;
But what shall I do when the spring comes in,
And flowers shoot up in me?

OLD MAN

Dawn sprang wildly to her lips,
And the little hard breasts burst as a waterfall over the
rocks.
I, the dark pine at the precipice edge,
Lunged and was still;
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,
Topped, and ran with her youth to the sea.

They said I was wanton and cruel
To have taken her youth at the height,
To have matched the great might
Of my years
With her slender beauty and tremulous fears.

I tell you, I lunged and was still;
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,

Loureine Aber

Toppled, and ran with her youth to the sea. . . .
Pity *me!*

GIRL

Dreamily, girl—
Duskily, night,
Cover your dead.
Make a plot by the old stream's head,
Plant him and pray
Till worlds make way
And the blooms come.

Duskily, night—
Dreamily, girl.

DEATH

I am waiting for the white winds to come,
White with the long-whispering dust,
Withered under hoofs and feet,
White with the mountains that blow their sleep
Into the sea.
I am waiting for the white winds to come,
Lifting their hands as beautiful women clad for the moon;
And soon, ah soon,
Lifting my heart to be ashes and wind.

Loureine Aber

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

POEMS

JOY

Joy, Joy, run over me
Like water over a shining stone;
And I beneath your sweet shall be
No longer hungry and alone.
The light at my heart's gate is lit—
My love, my love is tending it!

CEREMONY

The unpeopled conventional rose garden
Is where I shall take my heart
With this new pain.
Clipped hedge and winter-covered beds
Shall ease its hurt.
When it has grown quiet,
I shall mount the steps, slowly,
And put three sorrows in the terra-cotta urn
On that low gate-pillar,
And leave them there, to sleep,
Beneath the brooding stillness of a twisted pine.

FIRST COMER

Gold bee,
You cling too still and drowsily

Maurine Smith

In the frosty noon.
Think you
The dandelion is a sun
To warm your body through?

WIND

Gulls take veering way
Through the fresh day;
Crisp brown oak-leaves whirl and rise.
Though my heart flies,
I must go
Carefully and slow.

Eager is the wind, shy
As any butterfly—
I'll not blur life with my frosty breath,
Nor think again of death!

SWALLOWS BRUSH A POOL

Let there be end of talk of good and evil,
Thirst, hunger and the rest . . . Beauty has given
The white gift of a cherry petal
To brood upon.

Maurine Smith

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THREE SMALL POEMS

TO GET WISDOM

I will spread out my mind
As the wind spreads the skies;
I will make my heart Argus,
Full of love's eyes:
So shall I grow
Abysmally wise.

MEEKNESS AND PRIDE

Meekness and Pride
Are fruits of one tree;
Eat of them both
For mastery:
Take one of Pride—
Of the other, three.

COURAGE

Courage is armor
A blind man wears,
The calloused scar
Of outlived despairs:
Courage is Fear
That has said its prayers.

[16]

Karle Wilson Baker

NOT IN THE WHIRLWIND

Do I speak soft and little—
Do I offer you a drop of honey in a bent brown leaf?
Yet I too have been rent by the whirlwind:
I have lain trembling under its bellowings;
I have endured its fangs;
I have heard it hiss and groan, "Bitterness, bitterness!"
But all I have left,
After its searchings and its rendings,
May be told in a soft voice
And is sweet—
Sweet,
Like a drop of thick honey in a bent brown leaf.

Karle Wilson Baker

KEEP MY HAND

Keep my hand, because I am afraid
To be alone—
I am afraid of all the dreams I made.
If you were shown
Dream after little dream that I made gay
To keep my spirit strong upon the way,
You would hold my hand closer than you do
Within your own!

Louise Driscoll

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

UNDER THE CLIFF

SHADOW CANYON

The earth has carved a hollow cup,
In which, most delicately set,
Tall redwood boughs are lifted up,
To form a sky-enlacing net.

There, on the ground made green with fern,
The sunshine lies in pools of light;
And iris holds a fragile urn,
With morning's gems of dew bedight.

There is no sound but water going,
And sunlight thrilling through the air.
There is no breath but breezes blowing,
And wild quail rustling to their lair.

Here is a deep and drowsing haven,
That woven sun-rays pierce and cross;
And on the peaceful trees are graven
The little footprints of the moss.

Sweet dreaming canyon, shadow-bound
Yet sunshine-stippled all the day,
The calm skies circle you around,
But you lie deeper hushed than they!

Miriam Allen deFord

THEMES

"I remember" and "I wish"—
Of such stuff are poems fashioned;
Poems lyric with regret,
Vibrant poems, dream-impassioned.

In your honor and your praise
I would strike a richer chord,
Sing: "I have you and am yours,
O adorer and adored!"

WILL IT BE LIKE THIS?

Will it be like this?—
Climbing the hill at midnight,
While the rain seeps from the plumaged pepper-trees,
And the damp air is rank with eucalyptus;
And our little house black and untenanted,
Soundless, where your hurrying footsteps
Used to run to the door to greet me;
Black, and cold, and I alone there?
Will that be the way of it,
On that silent day when I shall begin waiting
For Death to release me to you?

Miriam Allen deFord

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SIC PASSIM

The Angel. Now here's the road to Allencourt,
And here's the road to Tyre.
And he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre,
Among the cedar trees?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

While he who goes to Allencourt
Across the Hills of Pain
Must love his fellow very well,
And count no thing as gain

That wounds another. He must keep
His eyes upon the crest
Of that high hill, where he at last
Through virtue shall find rest.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre,
Along the road of ease?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please;

While he who goes to Allencourt,
And does not lose his way
Among the thorns and brambles, comes
To rich reward some day.

Joseph Andrew Galahad

The Old Man. Ah, why are thorns and brambles set
To make the road a care?

The Angel. Why, man himself, most carelessly,
Has placed the brambles there.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre
Beside the sunny seas?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

The Old Man. And what's the toll to Allencourt?

The Youth. And what's the toll to Tyre?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire.

The toll is love—a brother's love—
For man in full sincerity.
And all the peace that God has willed
Is the reward—eternally.

But toll upon the other road
Is crucible of burn and freeze:
For he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

While he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire . . .

The Old Man. Lord, lead me on to Allencourt!

The Youth. For me, I go to Tyre.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

RECALLED

You see it not . . . ? This Rose of Rhone
Has something of the flow
Of light—like a liquid lacquer on the wall.
And old Madrid—I swear, it shone
More with your light, your glow,
Than that of the sun. Why do your eyelids fall?

You hear it not . . . ? The Prado was
A sweeping meadow then:
The swing of the tunes of time was in your tone.
No dream comes to you now because
You hear my voice again—
No dream of a youth you passed at dusk alone?

Three hundred years . . . ! you mark them not?
And yet—you loved me then,
Who now in the light of mullioned windows stand.
And it is you who have forgot
That once, O sought of men!—
When I was the king of Spain I kissed your hand.
Joseph Andrew Galahad

SEA QUATRAINS

I

Too fast the silly white-caps run
Their helter-skelter races;
They stumble when the goal is won
And fall upon their faces.

II

A purple light is shaken over
The greener ocean shadows,
Like clover on the cooler depths
Of grass in upland meadows.

III

The sea hangs kelp upon the sand
Like garlands on a grave,
Mourning the dead and silent land
With every living wave.

IV

The breakers thunder in the night
With which the sea is drenched.
Only one plunging line is white;
Even the stars are quenched.

V

The fairest ship ever a wreck
Had not so white a sail
As this fair wave cast up to break,
Driven before the gale.

Grant H. Code

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FRAGILITIES

SONG

These are the words of the wind:
 Over your white body shall pass
 Whorls of water, whorls of light,
 Of the lustre of blown glass.
These are the words of the wind.

You are beloved of the silence
 And the grey still rain.
Once the sun loved you utterly,
 And shall love you again.

These are the words of the wind:
 Over your white body shall pass
 Whorls of water, whorls of light,
 Of the lustre of blown glass.
These are the words of the wind.

LAKE

You are a broad white lake,
Silent.
On your surface people launch their brown sun-warmed
 souls.
Reflected in you, they see themselves
Tall, profound, mystical.

COMMENT

POETRY AND THE ALLIED ARTS

POETRY would like to celebrate its ninth birthday by inaugurating a closer affiliation with the allied arts of music and the drama—perhaps also the dance. If the movies, and the scarcely less photographic commercial plays, are banishing poetry from one end of the stage, it must needs go around to the other door, and re-enter hand in hand with the opera and lyric song, with the ballet, and perhaps, paradoxically, symbolic pantomime. Times are changing, and the arts with them—the poet, the composer, the dancer should prove their pliancy, their mobility. They should not—indeed, they cannot—stay apart; they must get together and co-operate, and accept each other's influence.

At present our poets and composers move in different orbits, have scarcely a bowing acquaintance with each other either personally or professionally. POETRY would be grateful for suggestions as to the best available method of establishing closer relations.

Not long ago *Musical America* published an article by Charles Albert Case, a well-known tenor, entitled *The Quest of the American Song*, and sub-titled *A Challenge to Poets rather than Composers*. Mr. Case thinks that the American public wants American songs, and that the singers are eager for this change from the usual polyglot programs, but that it is impossible to make up

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

a sufficiently interesting and varied recital without foreign aid. And for this condition he thinks our poets are more to blame than our musicians. He says:

The fact that there are few American songs which are truly great is a challenge to American poets rather than to American composers. The question "what to sing" is the most vital and the most persistently intrusive one that a busy song recitalist has to face. Naturally American singers want very much to sing American songs, and most of us do sing them, but in building our recital programs we invariably find ourselves limited in the number of such songs we can use; for we must avoid singing a succession of songs in the same humor, and when one is face to face with the assembled material one finds that the contrasting elements which make for essential variety in the "group unit" are astonishingly lacking.

Mr. Case then contrasts our meagreness with German and French richness, and continues:

Being a loyal American, I admit it reluctantly, but there is far less variety in American songs, even when one plans to choose a group from several different composers, than one can find in any single one of the greater German song-writers. . . .

We have some splendid American songs and some of them are truly noble, but most of them are not good enough. Many of the most successful of them are settings by other than American poets. Some of the best of them are not even in English!

Mr. Case then reminds us that a good song must unite two arts—a fundamental truth which both singers and auditors too often forget. He inquires, "What constitutes a good song?" and answers his query thus:

A good poem adequately set to music. There is the whole matter in a nutshell.

The many bad American songs are bad either because the text was trivial to begin with, or else was carelessly read and consequently inadequately interpreted in music. In some cases the text was even

Poetry and the Allied Arts

"adapted"—distorted, pinched and pulled into the approximate shape of a ready-made melody. Ready-made melodies are like ready-made clothes. They fit nobody because they were made to fit everybody.

Schubert read Mueller, Goethe, Heine, Rueckert, Uhland, Shakespeare. Schumann read Rueckert, Geibel, Uhland, Eichendorff, Moerike. Chausson read DeLisle and Gautier. These men read the best poetry of their time, and they read it with true understanding and genuine respect. What greatness there was in them lay largely in their power to discriminate, to select fine poetry from the mediocre, and then to bend to the task of making worthy musical settings. Too often our young Americans write as though they thought the lyrics of which they try to make songs were not good enough for them. . . .

I have frequently been asked by young aspiring composers to help them find words to set to music. They say: "You know—something you consider singable. I haven't time to read." This is rank impudence. I never offer such people much sympathy. I do not think they should be encouraged. It seems to me that one must read much poetry to understand a little. Reading, and reading with unusual intelligence, is part of a song-writer's job.

Thus far Mr. Case's indictment accuses the composers, but he concludes with a fling at the poets:

I have real sympathy for the trained, educated, honest-intentioned American composer who reads native poets and finds so little to inspire him to exercise his genius. Surely his material is limited. Eventually we shall have truly noble American songs. But first there must be noble American poetry. From the mass of it the song-writer must choose with a fine exercise of discrimination. We have many Americans who have the taste to choose and the ability adequately to set beautiful poetry to music. But American song-writing is at the same stage of development as American poetry. Let us hope that some of the lyrically gifted will start soon to write about something besides the sunset and the skyline from the Jersey shore, or the sensation of ascending Woolworth tower in a modern elevator!

Now, with all due deference to Mr. Case and his "trained, educated, honest-intentioned American com-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

poser," we doubt whether either one of them has sympathetically investigated the extraordinary range and variety of modern American poetry. We doubt whether either one of them, having discovered a poet suggestive for his purpose, has ever tried to get acquainted with him, even if he was a neighbor, and discuss this highly interesting esthetic problem on which the future of American song depends.

There is among American artists—poets, musicians, and all the others—a curious professional aloofness which fights against co-operation. The architect makes his design, the sculptor models his isolated figure, the painter paints his easel picture, all separate and alone—they do not get together, as in the Phidian or the Gothic age, or the Renaissance, to pool their energies and make a grand, complete and monumental building. In the same infertile way the poet writes his poem apart in his traditional garret; and the musician, seeking a song poem, or a ballet motive, or an opera libretto, reads in his library uncharted seas of poetry, history and romance instead of going where modern poetry is created and swinging into its current, so that the two arts may move along together and mutually inspire each other.

Among themselves poets—and doubtless musicians, painters, and the rest—are free-and-easy enough in intercourse and criticism. But this professional aloofness, this shyness, comes in the way of attempts at co-operation. A distinguished Chicago composer says he

Poetry and the Allied Arts

is "very familiar" with the work of certain equally distinguished Illinois poets, though, to his regret, he has never succeeded in harnessing up their poetry to his music; but we doubt if he has ever attempted to work *together with* any modern poet, in the frank give-and-take of such a partnership, toward the production of a wholly modern and American work of art. When I protest against his going back to the nineties for a pseudo-romantic motive for a ballet, when I suggest Stevens or Kreymborg, H. D. or Edna Millay, he answers by what might be called a flank attack:

I am very grateful to you for the copies of POETRY which you sent to me containing the Stevens and Kreymborg pieces. I like particularly the *Three Travelers*, although I doubt whether I could improve it any with music.

It seems to me that the thing we must all remember in talking about an opera libretto is the fact that we must depend for our effect on the poetry or the drama of the *action* rather than on the poetry or drama of the *words*. Therefore, the ideal opera librettist would be the poet gone dumb who, by his simple gesture, could make us jump through any hoop he pleases.

But even if this composer and others are turning toward pantomime and ballet rather than opera, preferring the orchestra to the human voice, even so they cannot eliminate the poet; for though no word be said, no song sung, the imaginative invention of some poet, dead or living, must furnish the motive, the story, the plot. And no doubt the ballet of the future will include the poem either as an introductory recitative or a series of lyric, perhaps choral, interludes; as in Rimsky-Kor-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

sakov's ballet-opera, *The Golden Cockerel*. Thus it is for the composer to choose whether he will be true to his own age and race by linking up with modern poets and deriving his stimulus from imaginations now actively functioning; or go back to dead poets for his motive, and thereby run the risk of endangering the vitality of his own art, of not connecting it up with either the present or the past.

But however important ballet and pantomime may prove as motives for modern music, it is safe to predict that the human voice will not lose its prestige. And it must be safe to predict that the sooner our composers look to their poet-neighbors for the texts of opera, oratorio, cantata, song-cycle, ballad, madrigal, song, instead of searching all ages, myths and languages of the past, the sooner will our musical art become as up-to-date and as racially expressive as the musical art of Russia.

Something has been done, no doubt. The present writer would be ungrateful not to recall Mr. Chadwick's fine choral and orchestral setting of the lyrics in *The Columbian Ode*. Another effective instance is John Carpenter's beautiful setting of Tagore's lyrics from an early number of POETRY. And we are permitted to announce an oratorio, which is to be the joint creation of Louise Ayres Garnett and Henry Hadley, the text of which will appear, under the title *Resurgam*, in POETRY for December. But such instances are isolated cases; they do not yet represent a general tendency.

Poetry and the Allied Arts

If POETRY can do anything toward such a tendency by making poets and composers more aware of each other, bringing them more in contact personal and spiritual, we should be most happy to offer to the utmost any service in our power. And we shall be very glad of discussion and suggestions. H. M.

INFLUENCE OF THE ART-THEATRE ON POETIC DRAMA

If the new movement in the theatre had accomplished nothing else, it would nevertheless be justified by the release it has brought to poetic drama and to the poetic mood in drama. The new movement, long since established in continental Europe, still struggles precariously in the virgin soil of America. It exists, however; and having existed thus far, it probably will continue to exist until in time it flourishes.

Meanwhile, by the creation of a modern technique, it offers poetic drama in English the first justifiable hope of escape from the senile lethargy into which three centuries of imitation had plunged it. Strictly speaking, there had been no poetic drama since the Puritans stopped the rich stream of Elizabethan eloquence by closing the theatres in 1642. Occasionally a dramatist, deriving his method from a compromise between the continentals, the Greeks and Shakespeare, had made a play in verse; or, more stagnantly, had built a romantic hodge-podge, verbose and rhetorical, around the pseudo-realistic

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

formula of the days of gas-lamp illumination. But there had been no impetus, no technical incentive, towards a renaissance of poetic drama until the new movement cleansed the theatre by challenging theatric values.

"To save the theatre," said Eleanora Duse, "the theatre must first be destroyed." And the younger men, the revolutionists, set themselves to destroy it in theory, and to recreate it in practice and theory both, by the simple but incisive idea of *re-theatralization*. No better proof could be offered of the sterility of poetic drama than the fact that these men were all, without exception, men of the theatre—directors, scenic artists, actors—none of them playwrights. In other words, the new movement differed from any earlier developments of the kind, so far as I know, in being almost wholly independent of the drama. The emphasis was shifted decisively from the drama to the theatre as the dominant art form.

Now, that habit of mind which insists that the theatre shall be the handmaid of the arts, and particularly of the art of writing, is apt to view such a transfer of emphasis with alarm. For the theatre to assert its own inherent vitality is permissible so long as it does not intrude this vitality into the sacred traditions of the drama. But the new movement involves an esthetic too fundamental not to re-open the entire problem of dramatic construction. Concerned chiefly with the production of the play in the theatre, it uncovers an esthetic resource that touches the very definition of poetic drama.

Influence of the Art-theatre on Poetic Drama

The reform in stagecraft is a protest against the fallacy of a realistic technique, against that ineptitude of the *mise en scène* which has made "theatrical" a synonym for the imitation of beauty by tinsel and exaggeration. It is toward a simplified and therefore an allusive and poetic decoration, toward an emotional and therefore a poetic use of light, toward a rhythmic and therefore a poetic movement. In synthesizing these visual elements into an organic whole, the new stagecraft has released in them a dramatic value entirely apart from representation. Just as poetry is the rhythmic expression of a theme to be developed by words, so these visual elements in the theatre serve both the purpose of representation and of rhythmic beauty. Thus, the background may be both a statement of locality, and a design holding the production in key. Movement may be utilized not only for its obvious and objective purpose, but also for the intrinsic beauty of motion. Light, treated emotionally, is capable of following, emphasizing, or even leading the mood of the action.

I have attempted briefly to indicate the trend of the new stagecraft because in this discovery of an independent esthetic resource in the visual elements of the theatre originates the essential difference between the new technique and the old, as it affects the dramatist. The central rhythm of the play, instead of being developed through words only, is developed through all the media of production—through light, stage decoration and movement

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

as well as through the spoken word. These visual elements become a part of the inner structure of the play; and because of their poetic quality they bind the theatre inseparably to poetry, to poetic drama, making the theatre a place well fitted for the renaissance of poetic drama.

But with these additional factors of expression, it is no longer necessary for the dramatist to trust so exclusively, and cling so tenaciously, to words. In the Elizabethan drama even the locality of the scene was often stated in words: every mood, every emotion was projected verbally. It was a drama of eloquence; and as such it suited, as no other form could, the torrential flood of Elizabethan poetry. But modern poetry, irrespective of the drama, is more restrained; it tends to leave much unsaid, to project the meaning by ellipsis and overtones. Unless I am mistaken, though I know little of the technique of poetry, this brevity is sometimes carried to extreme lengths, in which the imagination of the reader supplies much more at the poet's instigation than the poet himself expresses. It is a subtle technique; and it is pre-eminently the technique of the dramatist.

With this distinction: that, instead of restraining verbal expression to stimulate the imagination of the reader, the dramatist uses words cautiously in adjustment to the other media of his expression. To take an obvious, and well understood, example: a gesture is sometimes equal in effectiveness to many words. In the theatre, where

Influence of the Art-theatre on Poetic Drama

economy of expression is imperative, gesture and words will often complement each other without duplication. And what is true of gesture becomes true in the art-theatre of all phases in movement, of stage decoration, of light; and on occasion of music.

The effect of this upon the poetry of the poetic drama, and especially upon verse structure, is significant and far-reaching. It necessitates the development of a verse form that will admit of distortions, interruptions and irregularities. These are more apparent than real. As soon as the poetic drama is conceived as a fusion of many arts into an organic whole, the rhythm of the play becomes an inclusive rhythm to the progression of which all the media are contributory and in a sense subordinate. The irregularities in such a drama would be due to the separation of the verse from its theatric context. When the play came into being in the theatre these irregularities would disappear, merging into the larger current of rhythmic beauty. To the dramatist this may seem the weakness or the strength of the new poetic drama—that it comes to fulfilment only in the theatre, as a symphony lives only in the orchestra.

Blank verse, which alone of the standard forms has been accepted as a proper medium for the poetic drama in English, depends for acceptance upon an insidious flexibility. This flexibility serves the purpose of the theatre so long as the characters keep talking. But talk they must; and the terrified volubility of the poetic drama is,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I think, one of the reasons why it has been in general a form displeasing to modern audiences. This is no fault of blank verse, which has been deflected from its original and legitimate intention to serve as best it might an art that lacks its own form. It has thus created a compromise between the printed page and the theatre which has made the poetic drama neither fish nor flesh, neither wholly satisfactory for reading nor wholly satisfactory for acting.

Moreover, the need for well-rounded periods has reacted upon the dramatist by giving him a false sense of untroubled leisure. The time element, which scarcely exists in the printed page, is in the theatre of the utmost importance. The reader may take his own pace: the auditor must listen; he must accept the pace of the actor. The verse is spoken apparently with a retarded movement, and must therefore be quantitatively less, and more compact for the purpose. Such a compactness is hostile, one would say, judging by examples, to the mood of blank verse. One need only refer, among many instances, to the plays of Stephen Phillips or Zoë Akins, each of whom has a keen dramatic instinct; or to that parody of Elizabethan grandeur, that *reductio ad absurdum* of rhetoric in a theme not without power, *Caius Gracchus*, to note the clogging result of the intrusion of the stricter verse forms into the theatre. It may almost be stated as a generality that, other things being equal, the more smoothly a play reads the worse it will act.

Influence of the Art-theatre on Poetic Drama

A new verse form that will be native to the theatre, that will be an inseparable component of the flow of the complex rhythm of the play, cannot be created out of hand. It too, like the modification of painting for stage decoration, of illumination for emotional lighting, must develop through knowledge of the exigencies of the medium. To understand the poetic theatre is to understand the use of poetry in that theatre. In America the dramatist has grasped neither the technique nor the possibilities in expression that it offers him. Toy plays, Columbine plays, gay and adolescent trifles, thin tragedies—all superficial experiments in the externals of the new stagecraft—follow one another in an almost (but fortunately not quite) unbroken succession.

In a recent article the most brilliant director that the new movement has produced this side the Atlantic, Maurice Browne, summarizes thus the situation in respect of finding a drama for the art-theatre:

A fight which has hardly begun: the fight for *the play*. That is where the Chicago Little Theatre failed, and where all the artist-groups in America have failed, except perhaps the Provincetown Players.

But it may be true that out of a clearer understanding will come the dramatist who will evolve the form which his medium demands. And after him—the deluge.

Cloyd Head

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

REVIEWS

MUSEUM SHIPS

Ships in Harbor, by David Morton. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

What is there in David Morton's verse that seems to save it, that intervenes in moments of irritation with its punctual urbanity? There is not an original line in it. Not one cry, one intense expression comes from it; one vision, that the poet has kept from his privileged dreaming, which can draw the mind an inch out of even the shallowest rut.

Is it its cleanly manufacture, its unstraying measures and kempt familiar figurines? To me its charm has been a charm too soon worn out—the charm that sometimes attracts us to a diffident guest when we are overborne by the intrusions and ineptitudes of the vivacious, when the quiet and subdued deceptively appear to be powerful and profound.

It is fatal, however, to turn closely to the poems themselves for verification. They are demure enough, but thin and fragile; and made with earnest and helpless plagiarism. Never the robust piracies of a Shakespeare or Sterne, but a pallid imitativeness that paints the past more ruinous with perfunctory restorations, and blows about it feeble ghosts—pale, mute, and not recognizable as ghosts should be, of any of the shapes of destiny.

The book is called *Ships in Harbor*—there is such a poem in the book, and other occasional verses on ships. But

the reader who expects salt and storm, or anything authentically of the sea, should look elsewhere—in the dubious prose of Joseph Conrad, for instance. There are some conventionally nautical words and phrases, and the tidy thoughtfulness about mystical things that gives to diffident, cornered people their misleading impressiveness. It makes David Morton talk twice, on successive pages, of “weightless cargoes”—and one might add lifeless crews, and meaningless uses, and tinsel. The sea is brought in because it is on the same wall with Greece and Rome, spring and patriotism; and not being so bent with overuse, is more convenient to hang poems upon. Sonnets—for David Morton writes mostly in sonnets.

We agree that grammar is spoken language, stagnant; out of which nevertheless speech drips and sometimes splashes. We agree that rhetoric is literature, stagnant; that as there can be limitless variations of the correct sentences, phrases, clauses and what-nots of grammar, so there can be a limitless variation of forms of rhetoric. These verses are rhetoric, often skilful and surprising, often mildly intricate; but never poetry.

There should be a word bearing the same relation to subject matter which grammar and rhetoric bear to language. Pageant, perhaps; but pageant is free, ringing, and dramatic. Pageant is play, and this other thing pretends solemnly to poetry; but uses pageant properties. It rounds up all the popular places and heroes, the story-book locales and personae, and treats them with apologetic

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

sophistication, and with a snuffling sentimentality very wide of the crude romantics of the pageant crowd.

The favorite property is the Past. After reading this book through (a Spartan exercise) I turned the pages casually at various places to see whether the Past appeared as often as I thought. I read, in *On Hearing a Bird at Night*:

Out of what ancient summers of soft airs.

Christ, Dante, Athens, Time, Roman, pyramid, Phidias, are all in one sonnet called *Moments*; Pan and the Gods are in *Redemption*; and in *Encore*,

This old slow music . . . with dancers who were graceful long ago.

Does Mr. Morton make a confession in *Inviolates*?

For present loveliness there is no speech:
A word may wrong a flower or face,
And stars that swim beyond our stuttering reach
Are safer in some golden, silent place.
Only when these are broken, or pass by,
Wonder and worship speak . . . or sing . . . or cry.

The thought seems more penetrating than it is. If the present and the future are inviolate to the pen of the poet, the past is equally so, and Mr. Morton should quietly take to other things. He knows that the past is beautiful only through the poets who recorded its beauty—and ugliness. The Past is a convention; time is a unity, and no fragment of it is less alive than another, unless one wittingly puts on blinders.

To continue our census, this from *Transfiguration*:

Museum Ships

What old historic dust gives back the rose!
What crumbled empires yield the creeping vine!

And these from *Survival* and *Ruins*:

Lead back the tragic chariots of Troy!
The spring comes in to me like spring in Rome.

I might add, and so on and so on, because Mr. Morton's obsession is the Past, and it stalks him like a shadow everywhere he goes; although the other commonplaces of poetry, the ready-rapture articles of every variety, are not neglected, and although he succeeds as little in vitalizing the past as the sea. Perhaps for him the sea has run out, and the past has been neatly embalmed in a general history. There is even a curious indifference about them, as if they were a poetaster's shop-talk.

And, oh yes, the sonnets are very carefully made. They are trim, rhythmic, proper sonnets in every respect.

Isidor Schneider

NEW FIRE

A Canopic Jar, by Leonora Speyer. E. P. Dutton & Co.

This is the first book of a mature woman too intelligent to be content with gifts already fulfilled and creations accomplished. The book, hiding "the hidden thing, making protection for Hapi, who is within," indicates careful research into the forms of verse, and contains poems in various forms. The task of the reviewer is somewhat to disentangle the set of perceptions for which

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the development of appropriate rhetoric will yield most to her ambition.

Mrs. Speyer's ambition is neither historical, evangelical nor journalistic, but esthetic. This in itself is noteworthy. It is often said that pursuits and ideas must now be estimated upon their contribution to the war problem, the food problem, or the proletariat problem. If this were true, every healthy-minded man should strive in a chemical laboratory to find the secret lair of energy, which men will control in the good day coming, so that drudgery will cease, and food and power become so cheap that they will not be worth fighting for.

But in the meantime, if conviction fails us, or an unscientific education has forever limited our activities, there is a phase of thought in which a gifted woman may participate as well as a chemist or war-correspondent: these speculative adventures and flashes of interpretive insight, which, when fixed in pattern or rhythmic utterance, we call art. And if art is to remain as vital as protozoology, or, for that matter, as prize-fighting, its principal concern must be the search for new form, its own lairs of energy, however useless in the end.

In this search Mrs. Speyer is engaged. For convenient examination of the book, I shall take up certain qualities in more or less arbitrary order. In the construction of phrase which shall convey precisely a precise idea or impression, not a matter of verse-technique alone, her imagination is deft. Occasionally her abstraction is as

sharp-edged as a tangible object: "O pompous cry, O puny sin!" These are even stronger, and cling to the memory:

I am the path that my own feet tread.

Gulls flap unevenly through the muffled hours;
Spaces listen in hiding.

Rhythm is of course the special problem of verse. Two divisions of it may be dissociated: The first indicates an inner logic not otherwise shown, or an emotion not otherwise evoked, as in traditional or imposed forms. The other fuses with the rhythm of the fact, as that the old man walked amid the green rye, so that the old man may seem to walk. Movement is duplicated by movement-of-words. Coleridge is full of examples of this:

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.

Of this rhythm, Leonora Speyer may become a distinguished exponent. The lovely after-battle poem, *April on the Battlefield*—

And birds sit close for comfort
On broken boughs—

Squall, and *First Snow on the Hills*, indicate this ability. Curiously, although an excellent musician, she does not invent musical schemes which are interesting in themselves.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The American genius has taken up satire. The axe, which has rusted since Swift, but for such bourgeois holidays as Thackeray afforded, is used with new intent and no reformatory zeal. The bias given to perceptions by scorn, not spleen, is recognized to be as true an emotional bias as another; and perhaps, in a world of newspapers and languid religions, the most pertinent of all. In her speech, Leonora Speyer may capture the most mordant and bewildering humor of her time. It is not negative wit, and may not be completely conscious; but it strips away all hoakum, however sweet, leaving our intent and passion like a shell crusted with salt. There are traces of this trenchancy in her verse:

O bottled widow's woe,
Standing in ostentatious row
Within the gloom
Of dear departed's tomb!
Evaporated lover's grief!

A Canopic Jar has unpretentious beauty and clear thought, and no earmarks of vulgar success or sacrosanct largeness. She seems able to endure the inward conflict and sedentary work required even to 'commence art. And one may be sure that she will not rest upon the achievement of this book, or repeat it in her second, betraying those who have faith in her. Already her *Magdalene* ballad in a recent issue of the *Nation* is a finer episodic lyric than any in this book. She is able to create passages of such intransient beauty as this:

[50]

New Fire

Does the heart grieve on
After its grief is gone,
Like a slow ship moving
Across its own oblivion?

Who shall say that her fire in the rushes, which gives so
fair a light, may not come to burn gold?

Glenway Wescott

PAGEANTRY AND RHETORIC

Rip Van Winkle, by Percy Mackaye. Alfred A. Knopf.
Two Mothers (Eight Hundred Rubles and Agrippina), by
John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.

The talent of Percy Mackaye lies in the field of pageantry; and it is no mean talent, as he proved in his St. Louis masque. In pageantry the picture must speak louder than words, and Mr. Mackaye unquestionably speaks louder with pictures than with words. For years he has been laboring to find his medium through poetry. The sensibilities of an artist, and a laudable ambition, have led him to fake poetry; but his words fail to augment or enhance his pictures. Until he practically discards the use of words, he will not be a free artist.

Rip Van Winkle has pageant values rather than poetic. Written as light opera, it is patterned in the usual manner—dialogues, lyrics, comedy, dance. It lacks the snap of light opera, but its pictures and ensembles are distinctly valuable as sublimated extravaganza, and poetically effective as pageant material. The author has a vision for pictorial symbolism in broad compositions filling large

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

canvases, for extravagant effects to be put across great distances and to register in the conglomerate comprehension of fifteen thousand people.

The story of *Rip Van Winkle* is a tradition. It is material for a drama if the protagonist, Rip—light-hearted, humorous, pathetic, tragic—is sincerely and profoundly characterized. Playing, drinking, dreaming—the outcast—we want it all to the bitter end, not a sugar-coated substitute. Mr. Mackaye's more palatable arrangement of the story lacks the original tang. His tampering with the legend is like changing the theme of a play which has made the play. Washington Irving, Thomas Jefferson, Tony Sarg's puppets, all retain the old flavor. Mr. Mackaye's version is flat, lacks the old richness.

In the beginning of *Act III*, Rip for the first time takes the characterization familiar to us—a fantastic figure without locale. Later in the act he assumes the dialect of a New England farmer, and at the close he is suddenly transformed by the magic flask into a romantic youth.

Something of a fakir and something of an artist, Mr. Mackaye paints living pictures on an enormous canvas in a public park.

Eight Hundred Rubles, by John G. Neihardt, is a tragic episode compact in scenario but unbalanced in its development. The long speeches, the digressions, and the song at the beginning of the episode, hamper the progression at the start. They do not, to any extent, promote suspense

nor establish the exposition. In so short a play, the exposition must be precipitated into the drama immediately. Without premonition the tragedy is revealed, and the play is over before we know it has begun. The verse lacks ease, and the flow of line into line; it jolts over a corduroy road.

In *Agrippina* he again indulges in long speeches, and they in turn indulge themselves to the point of licentiousness in rhetorical luxury. The licentiousness of Nero pales by comparison, and the delayed story grows dull.

The stories of these two plays seem far removed, as does the verse; but it is possible that Mr. Neihardt's spirit lives and breathes and has its being in the far removed. All a poet can do, and all that one can demand of a poet, is to react honestly. The sincerity of Mr. Neihardt is generally acknowledged, but Bacchus cannot be revived by filling his cup with grape-juice.

Laura Sherry

THE NOVELIST AS POET

As the Wind Blows, by Eden Philpotts. Macmillan Co.

Not a few novelists try their hand at poetry. Apparently it seems to them somehow the fitting thing to do. Commonly they write poetry which shows taste and literary craftsmanship rather than emotional impulse.

Mr. Philpotts' book is of this kind. It manifests skill in the handling of rhyme and conventional rhythms. It has the sense of fitness which has characterized the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

English literary tradition for generations. It has also the "poetic" vocabulary and attitude which have been a part of the same tradition. For example:

For June must joy though joy departs,
And life must laugh though sorrow smarts,
And buds must break as well as hearts.

Most of the author's work, of course, is better than this, though still lacking in intensity and originality of expression. His lighter verse, such as *Gaffer's Song* and *Scandal*, possesses humor and charm. As would be expected in the work of a novelist, however, the narrative poems carry most entertainingly the rather boyish naiveté of subject and style—*Tiger*, for example; or *The Fruit of the Tree*, which solemnly offers the suggestion that if ape or sloth had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge it might have ruled the kingdoms of the world "with kinder wit than man." In *Tiger* there is a good deal of spirit and vividness, suggested by the rattling rhythm of the opening lines:

To the barking of the monkeys, to the shrieking of the birds;
To the bellow of the bison and stampeding of the herds;
At fiery edge of sunset, from the jungle to the wold,
Death stalks in shining ebony and orange-tawny gold.

N. A. C.

THE PROFESSOR AS CRITIC

The Function of the Poet and Other Essays, by James Russell Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Kinds of Poetry and Other Essays, by John Erskine. Duffield & Co.

The Professor as Critic

James Russell Lowell, during his Harvard period, was the leading professor of English literature in the United States. John Erskine, now professor of English in Columbia, has a distinguished position in academic circles of the present day. The earliest essay in the Lowell volume was originally published in 1845, the latest in 1894. The earliest paper in Dr. Erskine's book first appeared in 1912, the most recent in 1920. The two books therefore afford opportunity to compare academic critical opinion of two quite distinct periods.

Few persons nowadays read Lowell's criticism. The preface to the present volume, contributed by Albert Mordell, admits that some of Lowell's literary opinions "are old-fashioned to us", though the learned commentator characteristically claims that "Lowell, before Freud, understood the psychoanalytic theory of genius in its connection with childhood memories." Whether or not Lowell realized the influence of childish repressions, it is certain that he is old-fashioned. He speaks a language that we of today are not quite at home in and are not interested enough to learn. His classifications, his reduction of criticism to scientific laws, his rhetorical style, belong to the journalism of an earlier day. We shall not again attire our thought in this sort of raiment, any more than we shall wear the kind of clothes that Mr. Lowell wore.

This does not mean that Lowell's critical work was valueless. It was not. He contributed to American criticism a degree of scholarship and fairness; and, except

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

when puzzled by the intrusion of a man of genius like Poe, he welcomed, sometimes very cordially, the new writer. He did much to turn criticism away from the personal blind alleys into which it had previously been so often led. He is a figure of interest in the history of criticism, but we do not turn to him for guidance today.

Dr. Erskine's book belongs to its own time as much as Dr. Lowell's. The difference is that Dr. Erskine's day is ours. His four essays make an interesting book, with a flavor of sly humor now and then which adds a zest to its solid value. I think the universities should require every student who expects to teach English literature to read it, not because it is the best book on poetry of the present day, but because it is the best on the subject for the sort of person who usually teaches literature. But the publishers will probably not get out an extra edition on the prospect of orders from the universities. They doubtless know that Lowell's book is more likely to get the academic orders than is Erskine's. Dr. Erskine has the quality, never forgiven by the true academician, of not being interested in what everybody else has forgotten.

The Erskine book is also suggestive for the poet; especially the closing essay, *Scholarship and Poetry*, in which the author shows the value to the poet of an unpedantic literary background. The essay on *The New Poetry* is hospitable to the new, but contains little material which the ordinary student of the movement does not already know. I must, however, quote one delicious sentence:

The Professor as Critic

"Many of the new poems do look at first a bit outrageous, especially to old-fashioned readers who have not read widely in old-fashioned literature."

Lowell was in tune with his time, and Erskine is with his. It is unfortunate that much academic criticism of today is living in Lowell's time instead of Erskine's.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

NOTES

Mr. Wallace Stevens, of Hartford, Conn., has appeared often in *POETRY* since 1914. Two years ago his *Pecksniffiana* received the Levinson Prize. Mr. Stevens has been a frequent and valued contributor to the special magazines, but he has not yet yielded to the solicitation of his admirers so far as to publish a volume.

H. D. (Mrs. Richard Aldington), originally of Philadelphia but now usually resident in England, is also a familiar contributor since her first appearance in *POETRY*'s fourth number. Her book, *Sea Garden*, is published in America by the Houghton Mifflin Co.; and her translations from Euripides have been issued in pamphlet form by *The Egoist*.

Karle Wilson Baker (Mrs. Thos. E.), of Nacogdoches, Texas, is the author of *Blue Smoke* (Yale University Press).

Miss Loureine Aber, of Chicago, will issue her first book before Christmas through Ralph Fletcher Seymour.

Miss Louise Driscoll, of Catskill, N. Y., has contributed often to this magazine and others. Her tragic dialogue, *Metal Checks*, received a prize from *POETRY* as the best poem printed in its War Number—Nov. 1914, and it remains one of the finest poems suggested by the great catastrophe.

Mr. Nelson Antrim Crawford, of the faculty of the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, received last year a prize in a Kansas contest for the best poem published during the year by a resident of that state. The prize was awarded to *The Carrying of the Ghost*, which our readers will remember.

Miriam Allen deFord, who recently married Mr. Maynard Shipley, is

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

now a resident of San Francisco. She has written verse and prose for the radical papers.

Other contributors appear for the first time in this issue. Of these:

Maurine Smith was a highly gifted student at the University of Chicago, and a valued member of its Poetry Club, when she died about three years ago. Her friends have collected her best poems with the intention of publishing a small volume to perpetuate her memory.

Mr. Joseph Andrew Galahad, of Portland, Oregon, has contributed to various magazines.

Mr. Grant H. Code, of Cambridge, Mass., is in the faculty of Boston University.

Perhaps we should also remind our readers that Mr. Cloyd Head, of Chicago, who contributes the art-theatre article to our prose section, is the author of that powerful modern one-act tragedy, *Grotesques*, which received the Levinson Prize in 1916; and that Mrs. Laura Sherry, of Milwaukee, is the director of the Wisconsin Players, an organization which has been for years one of the most efficient and enlightened of the art-theatre companies in this country.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

The Blue Ship, by Herbert Jones. John Lane.

Eyes of Vigilance, by Furnley Maurice. Sydney J. Endacott, Melbourne, Australia.

Ways and Means, by Furnley Maurice. Sydney J. Endacott.

The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer, by Anna Wickham. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Sonnets to B. B. R., by Laban Lacy Rice. Richard G. Badger.

Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield & Co.

The Journey—Odes and Sonnets, by Gerald Gould. Yale Univ. Press.

The Captive Lion and Other Poems, by William Henry Davies. Yale University Press.

Curtains, by Hazel Hall. John Lane Co.

Ireland Unfreed—Poems of 1921, by Sir William Watson. John Lane Co.

Wampum and Old Gold, by Hervey Allen. Yale University Press.

Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

In Gossamer Gray, by Oscar Williams. The Bookfellows, Chicago.

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Prize-award Number

The Lions, by Edwin Curran
The Jilt, by Agnes Lee
Poems, by Henry Bellamann
Jean Starr Untermeyer
Florence Wilkinson
Annual Award of Prizes

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I think your July number is, not only the best issue you have ever printed, but the best issue of any poetry magazine that I have ever seen.

William Stanley Braithwaite

Vol. XIX

No. II

POETRY for NOVEMBER, 1921

| | PAGE |
|--|---------------------------------|
| The Lions | <i>Edwin Curran</i> 59 |
| The Jilt I-VI—The Blunted Age | <i>Agnes Lee</i> 69 |
| From the Day-book of a Forgotten Prince | <i>Jean Untermeyer</i> 74 |
| A Fillet of Thorn | <i>Anita Grannis</i> 75 |
| The Wages of Sin | <i>Jessica Nelson North</i> 76 |
| Fog | <i>Kathryn White Ryan</i> 76 |
| Geyser. | <i>John R. C. Peyton</i> 77 |
| Gargoyle | <i>Kate Buss</i> 77 |
| Don Juan in Portugal | <i>Florence Wilkinson</i> 78 |
| The Passers-by | <i>Dorothy Butts</i> 80 |
| The Parade—To the Hills around Northampton—A Van- ity—Audience—Listening—May Basket—The Transient— Difference—Please | |
| Poems | <i>Henry Bellamann</i> 85 |
| Gargoyles of Notre Dame—Edges—Lullaby—Peaks—God— The Artist | |
| From Queen Anne to George the Fifth | <i>H. M.</i> 90 |
| Reviews: | |
| Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright | <i>Laura Sherry</i> 94 |
| Of Dreams and Stitches | <i>Pearl Andelson</i> 100 |
| Correspondence: | |
| Poet and Composer as Allies | <i>Louise Ayres Garnett</i> 102 |
| Reactionary Composers | <i>Kay Boyle</i> 104 |
| Announcement of Awards | 107 |
| Our Contemporaries: | |
| A New "Youth" | 115 |
| Notes and Books Received | 115, 116 |

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oetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX

NO. II

NOVEMBER 1921

THE LIONS

THE jungle glistens like a cloud—
Purple-cool, tree-deep, lake-pearled;
Where lions lurk and thrash and crowd,
Like lands that battle for the world.
Behold, one lion leaps for his prey,
Trotting like a saffron mist,
As savage nations in our day
Pounce on some weak antagonist.

Across the jungle-painted grass
His roar breaks through the tropic air;
And he runs like a tawny flame—
Swift yellow stroke of lightning there.
His cry is like the thunder's sound,
Shaking leaf and bough and bole;

[59]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And he is part of Africa—
The yellow monarch in her soul.

Painted birds fly through the trees
And stain the sky with brown on blue,
Hammering with their wings the breeze,
Hitting songs across the dew.
Parrots gaudy as a star
Tap their bells and chatter sound.
Each insect sweeps his dim guitar
Like music hidden in the ground.

The tawny lion goes like a shot—
A daub of gold against the green,
Scenting a wounded bleeding doe
That he is following unseen.
A spangled serpent lights a tree,
A coiling flame around it, curled;
But the old lion goes great and free,
The master of his jungle world.

Bravely born and bravely bred,
Proud as a diamond of his fire,
This yellow monarch of the south
Goes like the hosts that swarmed to Tyre.
Hungry to kill, he scents the air,
And roars into beginning night,
His blond mane tossing up its hair,
His eyes two pools of blazing light.

[60]

He stops and lips the evening gale,
Reading the wind across the trees;
Giant cat in his tawny mail,
Spelling out the trail-warm breeze.
Then on he darts as though with wings,
To find his prey and drink the blood
And feast upon the harmless things
That God has put into the wood.

A gorilla slouches through the bush;
A leopard's eyes shoot stars of light;
The deep luxuriant forest hush
Hides serpents beetle-colored, bright.
The crane nods sleeping, spindle-shanked;
Gray monkeys troop and clack and peer;
A jungle stream goes emerald-banked,
Purring like a wild-cat near.

The cinnamon-colored land awakes
Around the lion fold on fold;
Yellowing with fruit, blue with lakes,
Stuck with fireflies burnished gold.
Gray monkeys watch the lion and talk,
Lassoing trees with leather tails;
Some far palms by the seaside walk,
And near-by sing the nightingales.

The moon hangs like a petal of gold
Broken upon the western sky.

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The blue dusk deepens fold on fold,
The shattered day lies down to die.
Here in this wild primeval place,
Savage, wooded, poisonous, still,
Far from mankind and human face,
The old lion goes to hunt and kill.

His prey is near, the scent is strong,
He roars out in his ghastly mirth.
There, bleeding like a shattered song,
His wounded doe is run to earth.
But as he leaps to take its throat
A younger lion leaps up and cries;
And there the two lions stand like stone,
The fires of ages in their eyes.

It took the centuries to make
These lions' sun-colored bodies bright,
These great-teethed felines from the brake,
Tawny, crouching, cruel as night.
Their eyes turn red—these cats of brown
Swift as wind, lithe as air,
Savage-maned and monarch-crowned,
With blazing eyes and yellow hair.

The painted snake makes not a sound;
The frightened birds shake in the tree:
Like two great russet clouds they bound,
These monarchs, for the mastery.

The teak-tree groans, the gum is still,
The coffee-tree nods to the duel;
An elephant calf stares from a hill,
A lizard watches from a pool.

White silver moon, an eye of snow,
Looks from the dusk with beauty hung,
Her pale lids open and aglow
Where starry ladders are far-flung.
The lions' steel sinews knot in cords;
There is a crash of yellow forms;
The zebu and chimpanzee run;
The jungle with the battle storms.

A roar that rocks the ground is heard,
And monkeys chatter, parrots flee.
The coiled snake and the gaudy bird
Slink from their everlasting tree.
The colors of the painted land
All disappear as quick as light;
The great palms tremble, and the hand
Of God draws over all the night.

The dotted turtles hunt the ground,
Now rocking with the battling pair;
The night birds, startled, make no sound,
The vultures scent the bloody air.
Hyenas wait to eat the dead
And pick the polished bones and wail;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A python crawls with silken tread
On silver plates of sliding mail.

The wild things of the jungle know
A battle of the kings is on;
The zebras cry, the tree-cats yell;
The tall giraffe has swiftly flown;
The spiders hang on polished webs—
Greenish discs of jeweled light;
A frog is croaking in his well,
The fireflies shower through the night.

The two huge cats are at their duel—
Two yellow whirlwinds, hard as stones;
Snapping, biting, wild and cruel,
Tearing flesh and crunching bones.
Jaws upraised and crashing shut,
Lifting, sinking, slashing there;
Paws like razors slitting skin,
Teeth like knives of white that tear.

The painted flowers drip with blood,
The hiding snake is crushed below;
The lizard stamps into the ground;
The trees shake as when whirlwinds blow.
The monkeys swing away and run;
The wildcat looks and leaps away;
The leopard, spotted with the sun,
Slides by into the mist of gray.

Edwin Curran

The poisonous flies have scented blood,
And elephants have come to peer;
Ant-eaters look into the wood
To see the battle of the year.
The scorpion squirms into the view,
And things unspeakable, to see—
Speared and horned and crusted blue,
The toad and reptile infantry.

The jungle sees the battle rage
Intense, ferocious, swift and fast—
A terrible and an awful sight,
So horrible toward the last
The lions have cowed the very night,
And stunned the shadows and the trees:
A scuffle like the break of worlds,
The shattering of centuries.

But the old lion shows greater skill,
With harder blows and mastery;
His teeth were longer trained to kill,
His strength upholds his majesty.
Yet the young lion is quick and strong—
So wiry lithe he seems to float;
He worries the old lion for long—
Till the old lion leaps at his throat.

They wave in battle, spinning round
Together, snarling, thundering, bright,

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Thrashing through the dry dead grass;
Until the day has turned to night,
And left the young lion dead and still—
In ribbons, mangled on the sod,
His broken body cold and chill—
The old lion still his lord and god.

The old master of the forest stands
With one paw on the fallen breast—
The monarch of the jungle lands
Whose victory challenges the best.
A king is dead—long live the king!
He roars, his eyes like coals aglow.
He calls his mate, a lioness there,
To come and feast and eat the doe.

He calls his lady through the night,
And she replies and comes to him,
Where the dead doe lies still and white,
To banquet in the shadows dim:
Like nations, when the war is done,
Who gather at the feasting board
To dine upon the hard-won prey,
Each like a monarch and a lord.

The snake slips back into his tree,
The monkeys chatter now in peace;
And over the blue woods there falls
The age-old night of centuries.

Edwin Curran

The fireflies hang their lanterns back
To star the dark; the beetles bell;
The lizards creep, and nightbirds sing;
The snail is dancing in his shell.

The yellow floods are still and quiet;
The sky is blue like trembling glass;
Beasts, birds and toads and insects riot
Beneath the stars in jungle grass.
After the battle night alone;
Moon-mist, ghostly poison-flowers;
Trumpeting of beasts that moan
Through creeping crawling crimson hours.

A shaky moon rocks in the night,
A grumbling sea, far palms, the crash
Of monkeys chattering as they fight;
Gray serpents going like a flash;
Slow turtles, swifter bats on wing;
Worms creeping back, and spiders, flies;
Lizards with poisonous following,
And fanged things in their paradise.

Slimy silken bellies squirming,
Offal-scented beasts of prey;
Hungry, lethal toads and reptiles
Who move by night and hide by day:
Tearing flesh of birds that nest,
Rending bones that drip with blood.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

So the jackals strike and quest
In the world's jungle brotherhood.

But must these creepers in their turn
Be conquered in the coming light,
As new hope rises on the world
And the old lions go with the night?
Yet who can tell what signs of death
Await the nations one by one?
Ah, what will happen in earth's dark night
Before the rising of the sun?

Edwin Curran

THE JILT

I

Let other feet go drudging
About the house he built!
A free girl, a jilted girl—
I'm glad he was a jilt.

We quarrelled till it almost
Destroyed my breath of life.
He nagged me and bullied me,
As if I'd been his wife.

II

We grew cold and bitter
The more we would explain,
And if we held our tongues
The worse it was again.

He flashed a cruel sign,
I flashed a cruel word,
And neither could forget
The blame the other heard.

III

But his eyes could be tender with love, and his voice—
how tender!
Some words he sang are with me the whole day through.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I hang out the linen and burnish the brass and copper,
And they won't go out of my head, whatever I do.

Strange how they come when I feel alone and forsaken,
How they wake me up when the dawn in my room is
hazy,
How they drug me asleep when the night has darkened my
pillow!
Ah, a song will sing in your head when your heart is
crazy!

IV

What can I do but sit here and shake
And let the windows rattle mournfully,
While Sunday brings him never and Monday brings him
not,
And winter hides the town away from me?—

Dreaming how he drew my soul from my lips,
Seeming just to hear forevermore
What my heart tells the clock, what the clock tells my
heart,
Dreaming back the springtime at my door?

V

Why should I curl my hair for him?
He said the trouble couldn't be mended,
He said it must be good-by and go;
And he took up his hat, and all was ended.

Agnes Lee

So all was over. And I'm not dead!
And I've shed all the tears I'm going to shed!

And now he's wanting to come again?

Perhaps he's sorry, perhaps he misses
The hill-top girl. Well, let him come!

But no more love and no more kisses—
Whatever the future, gay or grim,
Why should I curl my hair for him?

VI

I shall go out in the sun today.
I don't know whether to laugh or pray,
For along the waking paths of spring
Bird calls to bird till the branches ring.

Something stirs me—spring's own will—
To wander to the edge of the hill,
Where I can see as I look down
Patches of green on the gray old town.

THE BLUNTED AGE

*[The old man sips his broth and reads his paper before
the fire. His daughters whisper at a window. One of them
holds a letter.]*

First Daughter

I dread his knowing.

[71]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Second Daughter

She was his favorite sister—
Older than he, and very far away.
Think of it—no one with her at the last!
Better delay the telling . . . such a sorrow . . .

First Daughter

Ah, you remember how he loved our mother!
And yet, last summer, after she had died
He never seemed to take it hard at all.
He seemed too much resigned, too much himself.
It would have killed him twenty years ago!

Second Daughter

It is the age they come to. Something goes out,
Goes mercifully out. I often think
They learn to take death as they take their broth,
Their daily walk, their game of solitaire.

First Daughter

And you and I, sister? Already youth
Slips far and far behind us. Shall we, too . . . ?

Second Daughter [Tearfully]

How can you say it? How can you say it? Oh!

First Daughter

Here comes old Nurse Lucretia up the street,
Heavy with her dull robes, and hurrying
To be the first to bear the word to him.

Second Daughter

Sign to her, wave her away, wave her away!
He has seen her close so many dead eyes!

Agnes Lee

First Daughter No,
She has passed along, she was not coming in.

Second Daughter
Hush, he may hear!

First Daughter His mind is on his paper.

Second Daughter
Make some good reason, take the paper from him
Before he reads . . . the names. Who knows but
hers
Might be already there?

First Daughter It is too late.
His finger finds the column.

The Old Man [Calling] Here! See here!
Why, Adelaide is dead! My sister Adelaide!

Daughters
O father, father!

The Old Man I suppose it's true.

First Daughter
A letter came. Now read it, deary, read it.

The Old Man
No, let it wait. So Adelaide is dead!
Well, she was restless—go and go she must,
First to this place, then that place, till at last
She settled in Nevada. As for me,
Here I am still, and I shall count my hundred.
Well, well, well, well, so Adelaide is dead!

Agnes Lee

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FROM THE DAY-BOOK OF A FORGOTTEN
PRINCE

My father is happy or we should be poor.
His gateway is wide, and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

We live in a castle that's dingy and old;
The casements are broken, the corridors cold,
The larder is empty, the cook is a scold.

But father can dance, and his singing is loud.
From meadow and highway there's always a crowd
That gathers to hear him, and this makes him proud.

He roars out a song in a voice that is sweet—
Of grandeur that's gone, rare viands to eat,
And treasure that used to be laid at his feet.

He picks up his robe, faded, wrinkled and torn,
Though banded in ermine, moth-eaten and worn,
And held at the throat by a twisted old thorn.

He leaps in the air with a rickety grace,
And a kingly old smile illumines his face,
While he fondles his beard and stares off into space.

The villagers laugh, then look quickly away,
And some of them kneel in the orchard to pray.
I often hear whispers: "The old king is fey."

Jean Starr Untermeyer

But after they're gone, we shall find, if you please,
White loaves and a pigeon, and honey and cheese,
And wine that we drink while I sit on his knees.

And, while he sups, he will feed me and tell
Of Mother, whom men used to call "The Gazelle,"
And of glorious times before the curse fell.

And then he will fall, half-asleep, to the floor;
The rafters will echo his quivering snore. . . .
I go to find cook through the slack oaken door.

*My father is happy or we should be poor.
His gateway is wide, and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.*

Jean Starr Untermeyer

A FILLET OF THORN

Tell me, how can I sing
Who have not tasted pain?—
Who, having grieved an hour,
Laugh and am glad again?

It will take a winter of frost,
Aching and storm-filled years,
Before I am lord of life,
Before I am king of tears.

Anita Grannis

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE WAGES OF SIN

God the Inscrutable
Looked on complacently
The while young Denison
Slipped all his debts by careful insolvency,
Broke his wife's heart, and ruined the serving girl.
But Lobster Salad and Iced Watermelon—
That was too much for even a godhead:
"I'll smite him for that," quoth God the Inscrutable.
And the wretch died in torment
At two in the morning.

Jessica Nelson North

FOG

The sea is a meadow, pale meadow of silence
Where flowers are blooming, white flowers of sound.
And deep in the petals, the pale listless petals,
Lost ships fumble grumbling, with blindness half crazy.

Does He muse, the Creator, as He peers in the vapor?—
"So bumble bees trouble the heart of the daisy."

Kathryn White Ryan

GEYSER

Presto!—
A crystal dancer
Shimmers into the air,
Waving veils of mist.
Stricken,
She quivers—
Sinks—
Falling upon herself,
Dead.

John R. C. Peyton

GARGOYLE

Your tongue hangs out,
You gloat
And shout,
You leer a ribald sophistry
At me,
From where,
Half goat,
You stare
And lean in horizontal glee.

Kate Buss

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

DON JUAN IN PORTUGAL

At every pelhourinho's ledge
Faces to set my teeth on edge—
Gray gossips, like a dusty hedge,
Whisper and crackle.

I lean at Alcobaca, dim
With fig-leaves twisted round its rim.
Pauses a slim
Tall maid. Her name?—A Latin hymn,

Gloria da Madre de Deus;
A white-rose face dipped tremulous—
A profile carved as nobly clear
As love-child of Aurelius.

White-clad, barefoot and straight she stood,
Vase-bearing nymph ripe to be wooed
In some delicious interlude.

.

What need now to remember more?—
The tiled and twisted fountain's pour,
The vase forgotten on the floor,
The white street ending in her door;

Her head, a dark flower on a stem;
Her diadem
Of heavy hair, the Moorish low *estalegem*;

Florence Wilkinson

Outside, the stillness and white glare
Of Alcobaca's noonday square;
My hands that dare—
The beauty of her loosened hair:

White shift, white door, the white still street;
Her lips, her arms, her throat, her feet;
After a while—the bread and meat,

A dewy jar of cool red wine,
Olives that glisten wet with brine.
White rose of Alcobaca—mine—
We kiss again above the wine!

.

The red wine drunk, the broken crust,
We parted as all lovers must.
Madre in gloria, be' thou just
To that frail glory—
A white rose fallen into dust!

Florence Wilkinson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE PASSERS-BY

THE PARADE

Faces, laughing and torch-lit,
Passing and passing—
Laughing and torch-lit and passing!

Voices, crying and shouting,
Dying and dying—
Crying and shouting and dying!

Drums, beating and thumping,
Retreating, retreating—
Beating and thumping, retreating!

Gone! There remains but the heat
Of the August night-wind .
Blowing a leaf down the street.

TO THE HILLS AROUND NORTHAMPTON

Little New England hills,
How tenderly
You gather in this bit of world
To comfort me,
Encircling all I love
As I would do
Had arms the reach of heart!
Small hills of blue,

Dorothy Butts

If, having grown to be
More tall than you,
I shall be forced to see
The farther view,
How shall I feel
The solace of your rounded form against the sky,
Unless I kneel?

A VANITY

It is a vanity to make
The little waves on my small lake
Speak from their "deep spring depths."
What can they have to say,
Blown down the winking bay
The first half of the day,
Blown back all afternoon?
See—in the early moon,
Wind-driven home, they leap
And scramble on the shore—
And sleep.

AUDIENCE

Of what account the leafing trees—
Dead leaves in autumn? What were these,
Were there no poet's heart to please?
Of you and me what can be said,
Who are not, are, and then are dead—
Without a poet overhead?

[81]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

LISTENING

Into the night I sent my call
For you, and hung my head
When there was no reply.

Tonight the singing sky
Is calling me instead—
Cry upon ringing cry.
Although I do not hear your voice,
My head is high.

MAY BASKET

I love you, dear;
And all the little world
Loves my simplicity.

For in my love
There are no passions whirled
In wild complexity.

No mystery
Of "Does she love?" and "Whom?"
Needs fathoming.

I gather love,
And ever find more room
For gathering.

Dorothy Butts

Will you take this basketful today,
Of old love and new flowerets, and say,
"This much she loved me during May?"

THE TRANSIENT

Dear, take my love and do not hesitate.
You think that I shall always wait,
I am so calm.

(It is to reassure, and to inspire
New confidence in you.)

Quick, take my love before it is too late!

Here are my hands held out to give to you
Their treasures—some old, some new,
All dear to me.

Oh, do not agonize me by delay,
And musing which to take!

Quick!—say I gave them to you, passing through.

DIFFERENCE

If you will wander, so shall I—

In opposite directions ply

Our irresistible two ways

Into the nights, into the days.

The east and west shall draw apart,

Like magnets, your heart from my heart.

.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

How vain our tears now we have seen
That east and west have common lures.
You were my magnet—I was yours,
With all the world between.

PLEASE

Give me the old familiar things,
Though they be very plain:
The quaint old tune Joanna sings,
The small house in a lane,
Whose fragrance meets the open door;
The faded carpet on the floor,
The patient peace of furniture—
Familiar things I can endure.

I have been brave a long, long while,
Heard praise, and scorning afterward;
I have met eyes that did not smile,
And now I ask for my reward.
I know the panoramic strand
Of happiness, and grief's sequence.
Rough grains have scratched my venturous hand.
I beg no tribute nor defence;
I only ask familiar things—
The quaint old tune Joanna sings.

Dorothy Butts

POEMS

GARGOYLES OF NOTRE DAME

I watch them shuttle and weave and run
Like dust before a scolding wind:
Boats on the water,
Leaves on the bank,
And men on the streets and square.
Leaves and snow and leaves again,
And men.
Boats to the sea,
Leaves to the wind,
Men to gibbet and wheel—
To thrones,
To bed,
To Père Lachaise.
Muddy tracks in the snow,
And blood on the wheel,
And rotting leaves on the tiles—
The wind and rain will sweep them away
As a soft curled plume might sweep
Flecks from a silken gown.

Shuttle and weave and run—
Boats to the sea,
Leaves to the wind
And men to Père Lachaise.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

EDGES

Edges are more beautiful than anything—
Edges
Where the quiet deep shallows into loveliness,
Where the clouds feather to wavering silver,
And color kisses its brighter self.

Life is most whitely light
Where its low edge
Melts in the still pool of death,
As the sky-rim sinks
In a moon-filled sea.

LULLABY

Tears for your pink, curled hands—
They must strain to hold
The smoke-thin garments of a dream.

Tears for your still eyes—
They must be pierced
By the keen blades of beauty.

Tears for your flower feet—
They must bloom like first spring
On wintry plains.

Tears, tears for your eyes,
And pink, curled hands,
And blossom feet—tears!

Henry Bellamann

PEAKS

Quiet faces,
That look in faith
On distance,
I will come to you
And gaze upon that peace.

I cannot tell
If it be wind you see
Across the summer grain,
Or the shaken agony
Of driven seas.

GOD

I often spend week-ends in heaven,
And so I know him well.
Most times he is too busy thinking things
To talk;
But then, I like his still aloofness
And superior ease.
I can't imagine him in armor, or in uniform,
Or blowing like a windy Caesar
Across the fields of Europe,
Or snooping in my mind
To find what I am thinking,
Or being jealous of the darling idols
I have made.
If ever that slim word—aristocrat—

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Belonged to anyone, it is to God.
You should see him steadying the wings
Of great thoughts starting out
On flight—
Very like a scientist trying a machine.
Patrician, cool, in a colored coat
Rather like a mandarin's;
Silver sandals—quite a picture!
I can't see him
Fluttering in wrathful haste,
Or dancing like a fool.

I don't go there often—
Only when I'm at my best.
I save up things:
Pictures of the sea wild with white foam,
Stories of engines beating through the clouds,
News of earth in storm and sun,
Some new songs—the best.

He's fond of being entertained
With what I choose to tell him of myself—
Very kind about tomorrow,
Indifferent of yesterday.

He's like that—
God in his heaven—alone.
I know, for I made him, put him there
Myself.

Henry Bellamann

THE ARTIST

What would you do—
If you had ear and brain attuned superbly
To all the iridescent humming-birds of faint
And delicate overtones
That play like spirit flames
Above the music?
Suppose your eyes could see
What mine see when a little wind passes,
And all the garden is suddenly barred and starred
With flying color.
Suppose the tilting planes of dogwood bloom,
In the green spring mist of young leaves,
Caught your breath as though a hand
Held your throat—
Or that the red haw veiling herself in May
Kept you awake at nights
Remembering her bridal look.
Oh, suppose this world of nuances,
Opal-soft and frail and swift,
Were for you a reality more hard
Than things you call reality,
And you lived always among the deaf and blind—
What would you do?

Henry Bellamann

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

FROM QUEEN ANNE TO GEORGE THE FIFTH

THE death of Austin Dobson early in September compelled us all to turn and count the milestones. Was it possible that he had lived till yesterday—this artist in triolets—lived to bridge over, with his trim little silver-silken foot-path, the depth on depth and height on height of wild and thunder-echoing change which lie between his time, his mood, and ours? Was it possible that a poet who reached backward even from Victoria to light his little candle at the wax taper of Queen Anne, that such an one could have lived through impressionists and futurists, through *fin-de-siècle* lassitude and Celtic revolt, through imagists, vers-libristes, aeroplanes, submarines, Russian revolutions and the world war—lived unperturbed in his eighteenth-century garden, a loyal citizen of an extinct world!

However, in the seventies and eighties Austin Dobson was a "new movement." Swinburne had been showing what might be done with English rhythemics; now Dobson, only three years younger, would open a fresh chapter by following the footsteps of Théodore de Banville in adapting to modern uses the old French forms of those fifteenth-century rhymers Marot and Villon. His art was of a neatness, a nicety; and all the circumstances of his life encouraged and developed its precision, its good-mannerly grace. A comfortable little government office,

From Queen Anne to George the Fifth

with three-fourths of his salary continuing on retirement at sixty; a comfortable pension of two hundred and fifty pounds for his services to literature; a comfortable home and family and "troops of friends"; and a comfortable by-gone period to retire into out of this troublesome modern world. Too comfortable perhaps—apparently a bit enervating; for his books of verse and prose all antedate his retirement from office at the turn of the century. Through the last twenty eventful years this poet has had little to say.

A master-miniaturist?—perhaps not quite, because his eighteenth-century portraits, ballads, dialogues are scarcely the real thing after all, any more than the "period rooms" which our master-decorators create today. They were done with zest, but not with the eighteenth-century faith—their fragile artificiality lacks the true DuBarry bloom. A master of *vers de société*?—possibly again not quite, because the master, even in that genre, always makes you believe, or at least suspect, that he is really in love, or in joy, or in grief, in some wistful corner of his gay but battered heart; whereas Dobson merely plays with pretended emotions—he is always frankly in costume. And as is the way with masqueraders, he usually makes too many bows and gestures, he slightly over-acts the role.

The poems in French forms also—the ballades, villanelles, rondeaux, though done with superlative deftness, remain literary exercises.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Always in costume, did I say? *Before Sedan* is a poem of simplicity and sincerity, with no superfluous words to mar the sad little story. And in this briefer poem, *The Cradle*, there is a quietly restrained feeling:

How steadfastly she'd worked at it!
How lovingly had dressed
With all her would-be-mother's wit
That little rosy nest!
How longingly she'd hung on it!—
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.
He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never pressed—
Her coffin was his bed.

In the best of the gayer poems also one may find a hint of feeling, a kind of artistic sincerity, as in an idyl by Boucher or Fragonard; that is, behind the shepherdess symbol is a certain wistfulness of dream. We all remember *The Ladies of St. James*—here is the first of its seven stanzas:

The ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

This poem seems to me Dobson's high-water mark—I

From Queen Anne to George the Fifth

cannot find any other in his two volumes of quite so fine a quality. *The Ballad of Beau Brocade*, *Une Marquise*, and some of the *Proverbs in Porcelain*, are as lightly touched off, but their artificiality is less skilfully disguised.

It is interesting to note how many of the muse's gayer fashions of the last half-century were set by Dobson. First, the old French forms, which soon became a fever, a mania, until every magazine poet in two continents was writing rondels and villanelles—a trick easily learned, and tiresome unless turned off with the rarest grace. Then the library fashion of bookish poems, including the Horatian fashion of light-winged tributes, imitations or free translations in the manner of the Augustan bard—fashions so effectively followed in Chicago by Eugene Field and B. L. T. of happy memory, and still pursued, often afar off, by every "colyumist" in the land. Indeed, most of the journalist-poets would confess that they had gone to school to Dobson, and that on the whole the discipline had been salutary.

The name of another venerable English poet leaps to one's mind by way of contrast—a poet also born in 1840, and now still sturdy in his eighty-second year. Thomas Hardy's mind, from youth to age, has looked forward, never back. He lit his torch at truth's camp-fire, and he has carried it ablaze toward the new age—no abyss or peak of change could find him unready or afraid.

Hardy, in his youth a man of our time or beyond; Dobson, in his old age a contemporary of Pope and Gay—

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

was there ever a sharper sting of difference? The difference between a great soul and a little one, between a seer and an entertainer. However, each in his own way has been true to his vision. One may grant to each the epitaph Dobson begged for himself—

Saying, "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."

But one must grant to Hardy also some more heroic line.

H. M.

REVIEWS

DRINKWATER AS POET AND PLAYWRIGHT

Pawns (four one-act plays), by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Mary Stuart, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Poems, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Does Mr. Drinkwater, poet, use his prose material for his plays? Is it not the duty of a poet to continue being a poet in the theatre? Mr. Drinkwater should suspend business temporarily, take an inventory, and separate his art material from his merchandise. Strong speeches, prompted by fearless thinking, project themselves through the mass of his work, but they are in great danger of being engulfed in heavy waves of conventional mediocrity. Indeed, the proportion of poor stuff is so great that one becomes prejudiced against the whole unless one reads carefully.

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

In *Pawns*, a volume of one-act plays, *The Storm* demands some consideration because of its theme and a small section of its dialogue. It is reminiscent of Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and of course it suffers by comparison. However, in this bit of the opening dialogue he has caught the quality and rhythm of the Irishman, and it leads one to believe that Mr. Drinkwater could write if he would orientate himself:

Alice. I have prayed these hours, and now I'm tired of it.
He is caught in some grip of the rock, and crying out,
And crying, and crying; and none can hear him cry
Because of this great beastliness of noise.

Sarah. Past crying now, I think.

Joan. There, take no heed
Of what she says—it's a rusty mind she has,
Being old, and wizened with bad luck on the hills.

But he fails to sustain this simplicity of speech and the atmosphere of the storm, or to develop the tragic theme with power. The speeches drag out archaically. The Stranger, one of the characters, states:

I was a dream,
A cold monotony suddenly thrust
Into a waking world of lusty change,
A wizened death elected from the waste
To strive and mate with eager lords of tumult.
Beauty was winged about me, darkling speed
Took pressure of earth and smote against my face;
I rode upon the front of heroic hours.

And through the remainder of the volume Mr. Drinkwater does not attempt to pull himself out of archaism. In the other plays he adds rhyme, which doesn't help any.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The title *The God of Quiet* sounds like Lord Dunsany, and it is possible that Lord Dunsany might have disguised the triteness of the theme. The theme—the return to quiet, to peace after war, the futility of war, the ineffectual result of fighting, the planting of revenge which instigates the eternal round of war, peace, war—must antagonize the artist. Weak propaganda for peace is a just cause for inciting belligerency, and this play is full of it.

Old Beggar. It is the quiet mind that keeps

The tumults of the world in poise.

Soldier. It is the angry soul that sleeps

Where the world's folly is and noise;

King. For anger blunts us and destroys.

Citizen. We are little men to be so proud.

Young Beggar. We are fools: what was so long to build
We break.

With the padding and piling of long speeches on the same theme, one feels that Mr. Drinkwater should have followed the trail of his King:

You god of quiet, some day shall men have spent
All the wild humorous blood of argument.

A Night of the Trojan War is a tragic episode and a good theme, but one is reminded of a better handling of it by Henri Barbusse in one of his short stories. *Cophtua*, the last play in the volume, must have been written in the author's salad days.

If one may continue to suggest other authors for the handling of Mr. Drinkwater's ideas, James Joyce would

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

be a good bet to develop the theme in *Mary Stuart*. Not that Mr. Drinkwater is incapable of handling it—the following speeches lead one to believe in him. If such speeches could grip him and control him to the end of a play, we should have something to reckon with:

Mary. My love is crazed, a turbulence, without direction. It was made to move in long deep assonance. I who should be love, may but burn and burn with the love that I am not.

Mary. Darnley, Riccio, Bothwell—there's a theme for a great heart to play! And there's so much to do. I have talent—as rare as any in Europe. It should be my broad road—that and my love. And I cannot use it, for my love is beaten up like dust, blinding me. To be troubled always in desires—that's to be cursed, not wanton. Little frustrations—and it should be the wide and ample movement of life.

Certain speeches have the depth and sweep of drama, they have the flesh and blood of drama; but they should be incorporated in another play.

The prologue is in modern dialogue, but without distinction; and it does not insinuate itself into the “dream.” The dream is lugged in on a dray. It fails to win you with its spell because there is no magic. The modern characters in the prologue argue a theme old in point of time, but modern because it has yet to be developed and established. As if afraid of its modernity, these characters thrust it back into an old story with conventional manners, dialogue, and wit. Whereas the vitality of the theme could break old molds, and precipitate itself without apology into a great, free, modern expression.

The play ends with the voices coming back out of the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"dream." This is handled effectively, it has the glamour of hallucination; but Mary's spirit's answer to Hunter's real question breaks the spell. It would be more dramatic and in better taste to let the play end with Hunter's "My God!—What's that?" and leave Mary's answer to the imagination of the audience.

We seem to be passing through the phase of "sightless thought" in the theatre—the gathering of material from history, from industrial, psychological or sociological problems, and making copybook sketches of life instead of evoking the unseen through the magic of art. Because the art-theatres are endeavoring to reserve the theatre for works of the imagination, they are branded high-brow. As a matter of truth, the recorders of facts, the chroniclers of the literal, are the high-brows, the remote ones. As Mr. Drinkwater says in his poem *History*, feeling, beauty, fancy—

Such are the things remain
Quietly and forever in the brain,
And the things that they choose for history-making pass.

The book of poems opens with *Reciprocity*, which commends itself to the reader's good-nature. It is pleasing, and springs from feeling. The poem *History* beckons with so pleasant a smile, and is really so charming, that one trips gaily over the trite poems which follow, until one receives a nasty bump in *Reverie*. After reading—

And only beautiful can be
Because of beauty is in me—

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

it is hard to press on. But if one is to be a critic one must have the unflinching endurance of M. Jules Lemaitre—"What if I were perchance doing my part in killing a masterpiece!"

The book of poems has many pages. We have a large group in the folk-song manner, two sonnets (we swing into their familiar melody with indifference), a group of love-poems tempered with pastoral coolness—songs fashioned circumspectly without unchaperoned passions.

The long poem, *The Fires of God*, goes the way of too many long poems—limping, strutting and striding. Seven-league boots would compass the same journey in a few powerful steps. However, the ambling in *Travel Talk* is pleasant and restful, as ambling in relaxed moods always is. And *The Carver in Stone*, another too long poem, has beauty and an insinuating subtlety in its development. *The Building* is full of nice suggestions, and significant repetitions which give heft to its balance and harmony.

Mr. Drinkwater, in both his plays and his poems, has many moments of clear thinking, but when he summons his naked truth and meets it face to face one feels that he is inadequate. However, some of his thought digs so deep, and has such power that one hopes sincerely that his prayer will be answered—

Give us to build, above the deep intent,
The deed.

Laura Sherry

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

OF DREAMS AND STITCHES

Curtains, by Hazel Hall. John Lane Co.

Comes Hazel Hall with her little book, every word and emotion of which is poignantly authentic. The usual first book of verse is conglomerate, and leaves its reader with the confused sense of having listened outside the tower of Babel. But this is the crystallization of a personality—one emerges from it as though one had sat opposite the woman sewing in her little room, plying her needle or stopping to thread it, and talking in a voice at once sad and indomitable.

Her judgment of the world is keen and impartial. She knows it by its footfalls. The step tells more than the chiselled expressionless face:

They pass so close, the people on the street!

Philosophy comes in through the open window. Inevitably,

Only one sound drifts up to me,
The blend of every tread in one,
Impersonal as the beat of the sea.

Often the poet's strength suggests itself even more in rhythm than in word, as in the three lines quoted above, and again:

The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death.

In *Curtains*, which is *Part I* of the little book, a certain wistfulness pervades, something compounded half of sad-

Of Dreams and Stitches

ness and half of hope. She is never bitter—even from *Defeat* she wrenches power:

Time's soft fingers gently close
Over my outstretched hand, and in
Their certain touch I feel repose.

In *Part II: Needlework* her touch is even surer, even more deft. I know nothing more definitely and delicately of woman than this handful of pages.

Every poem in the little volume is quotable. We have selected *The Long Day*, one of the less familiar, for beauty of form as well as for its representativeness:

I am sewing out my sorrow,
Like a thread, wearing it thin;
It will be old and frayed tomorrow.
Needle, turn out; needle, turn in.
Sorrow's thread is a long thread.
Needle, one stitch; needle, two.
And sorrow's thread is a strong thread,
But I will wear it through.
Then not only will sorrow
Be old and thin and frayed;
But I shall have tomorrow
Something sorrow has made.

There is something in these poems as personal as the warm and vibrantly sympathetic touch of a hand. The poet has given of herself with generosity, and she leaves one with the sense of being near and intimate. More as a confidant than as some strange reader, one listens with wonder to her fragile fancies, so musically given forth, and weeps at her isolation.

Pearl Andelson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

CORRESPONDENCE

POET AND COMPOSER AS ALLIES

Dear Miss Monroe: As a writer of both music and verse, your discussion of *Poetry and the Allied Arts* in the October issue of your magazine has an especial interest for me.

You quote Mr. Case as to the difficulty of arranging a program of American songs possessing sufficient variety of mood and treatment. I believe one reason for this, in the case of the individual composer, is that a publisher becomes accustomed to a certain style from a certain musician, and when the musician changes his idiom the publisher waggles a disapproving head. It is difficult to break away from old patterns and be received as the weaver of new, and often one's best work is a long time finding itself in print.

One of the reasons operating against poet and musician combining more freely is the scant recognition, even obliteration, often accorded the poet-member of the partnership. I am moved to a comment not pleasant to make, concerning as it does my own kinsmen. Observation has forced the conclusion that many musicians are a somewhat insular folk; or should one say indifferent? Surely not ignorant—at any rate, something that begins with I. They are apt to have a kind of unilateral art-sense, a squint-view, as it were, at creative expression, a proneness to feel not only that music's the thing, but the whole thing. It is a not uncommon experience to see the

Poet and Composer as Allies

text of a long work printed in a program headed by the name of the artist who has set it to music, the poet's name appearing not at all. Time and again song-poems are anonymously printed, singly and in groups, in the original or in translation; and the reader is left to infer—if he give it a thought—that the words had “jes’ growed.” There is small doubt that the verse yoked to music is often, one may say usually, of negligible inspiration; but if it be given the dignity of program-printing, certainly the authorship should be acknowledged. I look forward to the time when the poet in his association with music will be considered worthy of his hire, be that hire nothing more than recognition of authorship; to the time when all programs shall print, between the title of a song and the name of its composer, the bracketed name of the poet; and when all music critics, not merely the distinguished few, know something of the fellow-arts as well as of music.

Music-publishers have done much to accent the value of the text by giving it separate printing in song publications. William Arms Fisher, a composer of songs and the editor of an eastern music house, takes the broad view that in a song the words are of chief import.

The creative publisher of sweeping vision and the will to dramatize those visions, can do much toward bringing together poet and musician and all allied artists. My collaboration with Henry Hadley in the writing of an oratorio, *Resurgam*, to which you referred, was originally due to the initiative of Mr. Fisher. He asked me for the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

text for a cantata, and, following his usual method of presenting his wishes infectiously and with a large measure of faith, launched the undertaking almost coincidentally with the reading of the letter. When the text was finished he invited Mr. Hadley to make the music. Thus was a happy unity established: music, poetry, opportunity—for certainly the editor or publisher stands for opportunity. After the production of the cantata and one other piece, Mr. Hadley wrote proposing that we do an oratorio together. He said he had “always wished to express in music the sombre passing of mortal life and the glory of immortality.” Upon completion of the text I urged him to make suggestions, and while he was at work on the third section he asked for the interpolation of a contrasting mood. Certainly the text was improved by the suggested addition. I was kept in touch with the music from time to time, being told for what voices in solo, chorus, etc., the various parts of the poem were scored.

There is no question in my mind that co-labor between artists increases the joy which should be the well-spring, and not a by-product, of art-creation.

Louise Ayres Garnett

REACTIONARY COMPOSERS

Dear Editor: It has occurred to me many times, and with even greater force since reading your *Comment* in October's POETRY, that the present unalliance in America

Reactionary Composers

between modern poetry and modern music is primarily due to the complacency of the reactionaries of the musical world. By this I mean not only the reactionaries among the composers and critics, but those in the audiences themselves, who insist, consciously or unconsciously, that our operatic, song and orchestral compositions should remain more than a little antiquated, scented with lavender, while the contemporary arts are keeping pace with the complexities of civilization.

I am aware that the thought which must be uppermost in the convictions of the conservative-minded person is that a torrent has swept into modern art, literature, poetry, sculpture, and even into the drama; something a little ribald, lacking in dignity and beauty as he has known it. And it is perfectly proper, doubtless, for those who are so inclined to hold back a bit before plunging into the swirl of this new movement. There is, of course, always the possibility that each apparent step forward is in reality merely a mood which has taken possession of the reasoning faculties among the free spirits of the generation, and which will prove in time to be just a slight stumble, possibly in the right direction, occurring before the next legitimate step of progress is finally achieved.

On the other hand, it is quite as true that unless there is a tendency in the arts to reflect the spirit of the age—unless they are vividly interpretive, it is evident that they are without constructive value.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

From this hypothesis let X equal progress plus logical development, and behold we have those who would solve the problem! Sherwood Anderson is the forerunner of one group, Amy Lowell of another; then there are the followers of Picasso and Brancusi, of Maurice Browne, and countless others. Whether or not they gain a foothold is as much our concern as theirs, for they *are* ourselves, our explanation, the story which the future generations shall read of us. And meanwhile music stands like a Boston bas-bleu, her skirt a little shortened because of the influence of Korsakov and Dvorak, but still wearing her New England rubbers.

This, perhaps, is the explanation of the answer I have so often received in talking with American song-writers. I have asked them why they do not set such and such a poem to music, and the inevitable answer is given to me: "It isn't adaptable." Adaptable to what? Certainly not adaptable to the music of fifty or twenty-five years ago; no, even not adaptable to the song-music that we loved last year. It must be something so splendidly new that modern music will be able to touch the outstretched hand of modern poetry. *Kay Boyle*

Note by the editor: A word of encouragement comes to us from an enthusiast who has worked for years toward a closer alliance between American poetry and music—Eleanor Everest Freer, a Chicago composer who has used effectively many fine modern poems as the text for songs. Mrs. Freer has urged especially that operas and concert numbers should be sung in the English language and has inaugurated the Opera-in-our-language Foundation to that end.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS

For the ninth time the editors and advisory committee of POETRY face the agreeable but difficult duty of awarding our annual prizes. Nine years ago prizes in this art were practically unheard-of in America, although many annual prizes and scholarships in painting, sculpture, architecture and music had been liberally endowed in perpetuity—awards now ranging in value from one hundred dollars to two thousand or more, even to the richest of all, the three-year scholarship of the American Academy in Rome, which carries studio, board and lodging, and a liberal income.

From the beginning we have believed in such awards, as both a stimulus to artists and a kind of advertisement to the public; and have argued that they are as well deserved, and as effective for these purposes, in poetry as in the other arts. We rejoice that the tide is beginning to turn, and hope that it may prove strong and high. *The Dial's* announcement of an annual purse of two thousand dollars to be given to some one of its contributors is not aimed at poets exclusively, but poets at least have a chance at it; and the five hundred dollars, with which the Poetry Society of America has of late annually crowned some book of American verse, has an air of permanency although not yet permanently endowed.

In his letter *Concerning Awards* in our September number, Mr. Aldis asked the following question, which

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the editor promised to answer, or at least discuss, in November:

Could you devise and suggest some plan by which prizes would not be awarded for an individual poem, but based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need?

In reply we would suggest that magazine editors and other publishers of verse are usually so well informed as to the "talent, youth and need" of their younger contributors that they would have no difficulty in awarding on that basis as many scholarships or "encouragement prizes" as they might be entrusted with. Every year *POETRY* has observed this rule in awarding its young poet's prize, always wishing it had eight or ten such prizes, instead of one, wherewith to aid a little with honor and money a few young poets on their stern and rock-bound path.

The difficulty is not here—it lies not in making the award, but in getting the money for it. And patrons of the arts are not wholly to blame for omitting poets from such annual endowments, because this art has as yet few permanent institutions to which people of wealth might give or bequeath such a fund in trust. The Poetry Society of America would accept such a trust with joy, but it is too strongly localized in New York, and too academic in its present tendencies, to inspire strong hope of its exercising a progressive influence. Still less confidence could be felt in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, or its sacred inner circle the Academy, whose leadership is so

Announcement of Awards

hopelessly old-fashioned that it has not yet recognized the fellowship of women in the modern arts.

POETRY of course would rejoice to become the dispenser or initiator of such a fund, and would engage to satisfy any possible donor as to its disposition both during and after the continuance of the magazine. Some trust company of repute should be custodian, the interest to be paid annually by direction of the committee of award. In choosing this committee, the first rule should be that none but poets, poets of recognized standing and authority, should be eligible; and, second, this committee of poets should be instructed that the original and experimental work is to be honored rather than the conservative and assured.

The first committee of award might be chosen by the editor and donor, aided by such expert advice as they might call in. This committee—say of three, or possibly five poet-members, to be chosen from widely separated localities—should be self-perpetuating, but under a time restriction: that is, every three or five years one member should drop out on the election of a new one.

Such a committee of award would not derive from POETRY, and the possible discontinuance of the magazine would not interrupt it in the least. However, if the donor should happen to like POETRY and wish to endorse its policy, its editor might become *ex officio* a member of the committee.

Another method of selecting a committee of award was

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

suggested by a lawyer of my acquaintance. Let the presidents of three widely separated institutions—say, the Universities of California and Illinois, and the Poetry Society of America; or Harvard, the University of Chicago, and the Poetry Society of South Carolina; or any other representative three—let such a group of colleges or societies be requested each year by the custodian of the fund (the trust company) to appoint each a member of the committee of awards, such committee-member to be a poet of high repute, one not a member of their faculty or board of officers. And let this committee bestow the award.

Either of these methods would seem to promise as much progressiveness and fluidity, and freedom from local prejudice, as any artistic endowment in perpetuity can be. It would be for the donor to decide whether his gift or bequest should be used for scholarships—that is, student awards to young poets; or for awards of honor, so to speak, to poets who have done high service in the art. If the award should be generously large, the honor would become correspondingly conspicuous, and this fact would be a strong influence toward the worthy disposal of it, as in the case of the Nobel Prize.

We strongly hope that some man or woman of sufficient wealth may be moved to follow this suggestion—someone who would like to turn out of the beaten paths with his gift or bequest, and do something original and constructive and inspiring.

Announcement of Awards

With this rather long preliminary, we now proceed to award POETRY's three prizes for poems printed in its pages during its ninth year—October 1920 to September 1921. As usual, poems by members of the jury are withdrawn from competition—in this case *That Year*, by Marion Strobel, a group of seven poems in the February number; and Eunice Tietjens' translations, from the French of Antonin Proust, of *Modern Greek Popular Songs*, printed in November of last year. Indeed, no translations are considered for prizes.

We are enabled once more, through the liberality of Mrs. Edgar Speyer, of New York, to award the "young poet's prize," which for the past four years has been given, "as a mark of distinction and encouragement, to the young poet, comparatively unknown as yet, who, in the opinion of the jury, most deserves and needs the stimulus of such an award."

Hoping that our contributors and readers will grant to the members of the jury honesty of judgment, and will not demand infallibility, we now announce the awards:

THE HELEN HAIRE LEVINSON PRIZE of two hundred dollars, for a poem or group of poems by a citizen of the United States, is awarded to

LEW SARETT

of Evanston, Illinois, for his poem, *The Box of God*, published in the April number.

This prize was founded in 1913 by Mr. Salmon O.

[III]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Levinson of Chicago. Previous awards have been as follows:

- 1914—Carl Sandburg, for *Chicago Poems*.
- 1915—Vachel Lindsay, for *The Chinese Nightingale*.
- 1916—Edgar Lee Masters, for *All Life in a Life*.
- 1917—Cloyd Head, for *Grotesques*.
- 1918—J. C. Underwood, for *The Song of the Cheechas*.
- 1919—H. L. Davis, for *Primapara*.
- 1920—Wallace Stevens, for *Pecksniffiana*.

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by an anonymous guarantor for a poem, or group of poems, without distinction of nationality, is awarded to

FORD MADOX HUEFFER

of London, England, for his poem, *A House*, published in the March number.

This prize, or other prizes similar in intent, have been previously awarded as follows:

- 1913—Vachel Lindsay, for *General William Booth Enters into Heaven*.
- 1915—Constance Lindsay Skinner, for *Songs of the Coast-dwellers*.
- 1915—"H. D.," for *Poems*.
- 1916—John Gould Fletcher, for *Arizona Poems*.
- 1917—Robert Frost, for *Snow*.
- 1918—Ajan Syrian, for *From the Near East*.
- 1919—Marjorie Allen Seiffert, for *The Old Woman*.
- 1920—Edna St. Vincent Millay, for *The Beanstalk*.

Announcement of Awards

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by Mrs. Edgar Speyer, under conditions noted above, for good work by a young poet, is awarded to

HAZEL HALL

of Portland, Oregon, for her group of seven poems, *Repetitions*, published in the May number.

Six other special prizes, usually of one hundred dollars each, have been previously awarded: to Louise Driscoll, for *Metal Checks*, as the best poem of the war received in competition and printed in our War Number of November, 1914; to Wallace Stevens, for *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, adjudged the best one-act poetic play received in a prize contest—July, 1916; and four times to young poets, viz.:

1916—Muna Lee, for *Foot-notes—III, IV, VII*.

1918—Emanuel Carnevali, for *The Splendid commonplace*.

1919—Mark Turbyfill, for poems of 1917-18-19.

1920—Maurice Lesemann, for *A Man Walks in the Wind*.

Besides the above three awards, the following poems receive honorable mention:

Boys and Girls, and *The Way Things Go*, by Genevieve Taggard (June and February).

Down the Mississippi, by John Gould Fletcher (October, 1920).

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A Hymn for the Lynchers, by Isidor Schneider (October, 1920).

Gallery of Paintings, by Marjorie Allen Seiffert (July).

Swift's Pastoral, by Padraic Colum (January).

Under the Tree, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts (July).

The Heart Knoweth its own Bitterness, by Aline Kilmer (May).

Poems, by Yvor Winters (December).

A Song for Vanished Beauty, and *An Old Tale*, by Marya Zaturensky (September).

Sappho Answers Aristotle, by Maxwell Bodenheim (May).

Twenty-four Hokku on a Modern Theme, by Amy Lowell (June).

Tanka, by Jun Fujita (June).

In Maine, by Wallace Gould (November).

Still Colors, by Elinor Wylie (April).

Advent, and *The Cornfield*, by Charles R. Murphy (August, and October 1920).

Cape Helles, by Morris Gilbert (June).

Without Sleep, and *The Poet at Nightfall*, by Glenway Wescott (September).

Communion, by Hildegard Flanner (February).

(The editor regrets that the extreme length of the poems by Mr. Sarett and Mr. Hueffer makes it impossible for us to reprint the prize poems of this year. We must refer our readers to our April, March and May numbers.)

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

A NEW "YOUTH"

We welcome the advent of a new monthly—*Youth: A Magazine of the Arts*—and wish it high inspiration and long life. The editors are H. C. Auer, Jr., and Sam Putnam, the business manager is Henry Drews, and the place of publication is 70 East Elm Street, Chicago. The first number, October, which appears as we go to press, contains prose and verse by Ben Hecht, Elsa Gidlow, Emanuel Carnevali, John McClure, Pierre Loving, Henry Bellamann, Jun Fujita, Oscar Williams and others; and pictures by Wallace Smith, Steen Hinrichsen and Frederick Dalrymple. The list of contributors, present and future, looks promising, and the size and format are convenient and in good taste.

NOTES

Mr. Edwin Curran, who is a telegrapher in Zanesville, Ohio, has published privately two small books of verse, *First Poems* and *Second Poems*, since his first appearance in POETRY in March, 1918. In spite of their modest backing and poor typography, these have attracted a good deal of notice from critics of authority.

Agnes Lee (Mrs. Otto Freer), of Chicago, is the author of several books of verse, the latest being *The Sharing* (Sherman, French & Co.)

Jean Starr Untermeyer, (Mrs. Louis U.), is the author of *Growing Pains*, published in 1918 by B. W. Huebsch; and a new book of later poems will soon appear.

Florence Wilkinson (Mrs. Wilfred Muir Evans), of New York, is the author of *The Ride Home* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), and of a number of novels and plays.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Mr. Henry Bellamann, who is at the head of a music school in Columbia, S. C., has written verse and prose for the special magazines and music journals. His first book of verse, *A Music-Teacher's Note-book*, was issued in 1920 by the Lyric Society.

Miss Kate Buss, of New York, is the author of *Jeeons Block* (McGrath-Sherrill Press, Boston).

Mr. John R. C. Peyton is a young poet of Chicago.

The other poets of this number are new to our readers.

Miss Dorothy Butts, a native of San Francisco, but now resident in New York, graduated last June from Smith College.

Kathryn White Ryan (Mrs. Edward Ryan), went to New York from Denver two years ago, and has since published a few poems and prose sketches in some of the magazines.

Miss Jessica North, who is the private secretary of President Judson of the University of Chicago, has also published poems in magazines.

Miss Anita Grannis, of New York, divides her time "between the University of New York and Richmond Hill House, an East Side settlement in the congested Italian colony."

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Out of Mist, by Florence Kilpatrick Mixer. Boni & Liveright.

The Golden Darkness, by Oscar Williams. (*The Yale Series of Younger Poets*.) Yale University Press.

Selected Poems, by Yone Noguchi. Four Seas Co.

Rhymes and Ramblings, by H. W. Stewart. Alexander McCubbin, Melbourne, Australia.

Mexican Moonlight, by Russell Meriwether Hughes. Richard G. Badger.

New England Days, by Hellyn George. Four Seas Co.

Songs for Parents, by John Farrar. Yale University Press.

Yuletide and You, by Henry E. Harman. Stone Publishing Co., Charlotte, N. C.

ANTHOLOGIES:

Irish Poets of Today, compiled by L. D'O. Walters. E. P. Dutton & Co.

New Voices (New Edition, Revised and with New Material), by Marguerite Wilkinson. Macmillan Co.

The Greatest Poet of Contemporary Europe

is the judgment of the French critic, Eugene Clement, regarding Kostas Palamas. As the latter has written only in the modern Greek, his work has been slow to reach English readers; but since the publication of "Life Immovable" in 1919 and of "A Hundred Voices" last spring, the majority of critics in America and England have endorsed the high praise accorded the poems on the Continent. The translator, Dr. A. E. Phoutrides, has provided critical and biographical introductions which do much to increase the reader's appreciation. Although the two volumes form a continuous whole, their virtual independence is indicated by difference in binding and typography. The price of "Life Immovable" is \$2.00; of "A Hundred Voices," \$2.50.

"This volume [*Life Immovable*] is doubtless the best English version of a modern Greek poet and will prove of surprising interest."—*Classical Journal*.

"Palamas is a true artist with an eye for all the beauties of Nature and a sense of the mystery and wonder of human life."—*London Quarterly Review*.

"This book [*A Hundred Voices*] is a thesaurus of passionate beauty and hymns by a man who is a Pantheist, one who utters the 'Everlasting Yea' of Nietzsche to Nature and all her works. In the original Greek his poems ought to be a priceless and immortal treasure. The translation of Mr. Phoutrides is as perfect a thing as can be done. It is a work of love and understanding. Mr. Phoutrides has enriched our emotional and intellectual worlds."—Benjamin de Casseres in the *New York Herald*, July 31, 1921.

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"For the envisioning of the range of the 'new poetry,' and a comparison of its diversities, there is no other collection that compares with this anthology."—*Review of Reviews*.

"The introduction of this anthology gives a most enlightening discussion of the development and tendencies of the so-called 'new poetry.'"—*From the classified list of contemporary poets compiled by Anne Morris Boyd, A.B., B.L.S., Instructor in the University of Illinois Library School.*

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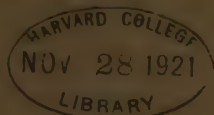
MISS HARRIET MONROE

who has studied the poetry movement in all its phases, will consider engagements for a lecture trip east, west or south in February and March, 1922; or for autumn and winter dates nearer Chicago.

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Vol. XIX

No. III

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe

December 1921
Christmas Number

Resurgam

by Louise Ayres Garnett

The Hostage

by Walter de la Mare

Neuriade

by Emanuel Carnevali

543 Cass Street, Chicago

\$3.00 per Year Single Numbers 25c

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Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

Vol. XIX

No. III

POETRY for DECEMBER, 1921

| | PAGE |
|--|----------|
| Resurgam <i>Louise Ayres Garnett</i> | 117 |
| I: Birth—II: Life—III: Death—IV: Re-birth | |
| The Hostage <i>Walter de la Mare</i> | 124 |
| Supernal Dialogue <i>Harriet Monroe</i> | 125 |
| Two Negro Spirituals <i>Fenton Johnson</i> | 128 |
| A Dream—The Wonderful Morning | |
| Handful of Ashes <i>Dorothy Dow</i> | 130 |
| The Captive—Waiting—Futility—Bound | |
| From a Bay-window <i>Pearl Andelson</i> | 133 |
| Autumn Rain—Steeple—Portrait of an Old Lady—To a Dead Love—To Felix—April Snow—Solace—Beach Song— Song on Death—Out of a Cavalcade of Dust | |
| Grey Crust <i>Laurence Vail</i> | 136 |
| Two Poems <i>Henry Saul Zolinsky</i> | 137 |
| Will Power—Pain | |
| Arpeggio <i>Winifred Waldron</i> | 138 |
| Semper Eadem <i>Paul Tanaquil</i> | 138 |
| Neuriade <i>Emanuel Carnevali</i> | 139 |
| Lake—Sleep—Aubade—Encounter—Sermon—Hope— Insomnia—Smoke—Funeral March—Italian Song—Old Accustomed Impudent Ghost—Invocation to Death | |
| Renewal of Youth <i>H. M.</i> | 146 |
| Alexander Blok <i>Glenway Wescott</i> | 149 |
| Reviews: | |
| A Flourish of Trumpets <i>Marion Strobel</i> | 151 |
| Fletcherian Colors <i>Laura Sherry</i> | 155 |
| Minor Chords <i>Isidor Schneider</i> | 158 |
| Post-martial Emotion <i>Baker Brownell</i> | 162 |
| Color Sonatas <i>Nelson Antrim Crawford</i> | 165 |
| The Prematurity of Immaturity <i>Isidor Schneider</i> | 167 |
| Correspondence: | |
| The Allied Arts Again I <i>Charles Albert Case</i> | 169 |
| The Allied Arts Again II <i>Bertha Wardell</i> | 171 |
| Notes and Books Received. | 173, 174 |

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX

NO. III

DECEMBER 1921

RESURGAM*

I: BIRTH

OUT of the dust Thou hast raised me, God of the
living;
Out of the dust Thou hast raised me and brought me to
the light of morning.
My eyes are full of the wonders of creation,
And my spirit leaps within me.
I behold Thy glory lifted into mountains,
Thy kindness deepened into valleys,
Thy hospitable mercies poured unmeasured in the seas.
In plenteous ways Thou hast devised the telling of Thy
dreams,
Entreating beauty from the clay,
And quickening man from out his dusty silence.

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[117]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Thou floatest flakes of color in the air, and, breathing on
them,
Wingest them to life;
Thou callest the dazed leviathan up from the watery
reaches,
And summonest vasty creatures who come lumbering past,
Astonished at their being.
Who am I, Lord of Creation, that Thou shouldst think
upon me?
Beside a mountain or a soaring bird, what am I that Thou
shouldst give me place?

I can praise Thee, O God!
I can praise Thee to the summit of my singing;
With the flesh of me, with the breath of me, with the
height of me!
Increase my stature even as the trees,
Increase my stature till I pass the oak and glimpse the
towers of heaven!
With the waters of gratitude I brim my cup and pour it
at Thy feet;
For thou hast shared the gift of life, and my spirit sings
within me!

II: LIFE

Into the noon of labor I go forth that I may reap my
destiny.

Louise Ayres Garnett

Sorrow is my lot, and labor my achievement,
The beauty of God's handiwork my compensation.
Something within me springs like a fountain and urges me
to joy;
Sorrow is as beauty and labor as reward.
Thou art become a greater God, O God, because of my
endeavor.
Listen through my ears, Thou of my singing sanctuary,
Listen through my ears that I hear Thy silent music;
Look through my eyes that I vision the unseen;
Speak through my lips that I utter words of gladness.
Walk Thou with me, work Thou through me, rest Thou
in me,
That I may make Thee manifest in all my ways.
I will praise Thee, praise Thee with the labor of my hands
And with the bounty of my spirit!

III: DEATH

Into the valley land my feet descend, and man may not
go with me;
But Thou, O God, companion me in love that I be un-
afraid.
The dream of death has flowered in my soul and sounds of
earth fall dimly on my ears.
Slowly the sun goes westering in the hills, and the crimson
pageant of my passing hour

[119]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Flames in their deeps and moves across the sky.
Something within me reaches back to birth and fills me
with exulting.

As the waters of a river, sweep the wonders of creation
through my being,

And life and death are so inseparate I know not each from
each.

And yet a mighty fearing falls upon me.

Shadows descend and blur the crimson hills.

A wind flung from a womb of ice

Blows from the shores of nothingness.

The shadows shed their shoes of stealth;

They run in naked swiftness from the hills

Calling the hosts of darkness.

The winds sing a song of fury,

The winds arise and shout their passion down the world.

Drained in a pitiless draught

Are the splendors of the skies.

Towers of cypress touch the heights;

Even in a battlement of gloom

The towers of cypress overwhelm the heavens.

My peace is perished,

My dreams are fallen from me.

Into the night no planet speeds its glory;

The stars are drowned.

Lonely the hulk of a broken moon

Lifts its bloody sail.

Louise Ayres Garnett

Merged into rushing torrents are the shadows and the
winds;

The shadows and the winds plunge high upon the shore
And swallow all the world.

Why hast Thou hidden Thyself, O God?

Why hast Thou turned Thy face aside

And burdened me with night?

Where is my dream of death,

And where its sanctuary?

The heat of hell assails me;

I am consumed in bitterness and pain.

Reveal Thyself, O unforgetting Spirit!

Reveal Thyself that I may be enshrined

In the beauty of Thy presence.

Drive forth this mocking counterfeit of Death,

For it is Thou who art my Death, O living God,

It is Thou who art my Death, and only Thou!

My fearing passes from me:

As a heavy mantle falling from tired shoulders,

My fearing slips away.

Candles are set at my feet that I be not lost forever.

Thou hast heard my cry, O Great Bestower!

Thou hast heard my cry, Thou hast lifted me up,

Thou hast delivered me!

Now does the hush of night lie purple on the hills.

The moon walks softly in a trance of sleep;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Her whiteness cools the passion of the skies.
I hang my quiet lute upon her curve
And let the night winds chant my requiem.
Waters of peace arise and drift me down the spaciousness
of silence and of sleep;
God lights His solemn watch-fires overhead to keep the
vigil of man's mystery.

In the triumph of surrender I take Thy gift of sleep.
Lean low, Thou Shepherd of my dreams; lean low to meet
me as I lift on high
The chalice of my dying.

IV: RE-BIRTH

I feel my spirit stir and half awake,
Then look in bright bewilderment at dawn.
O waking past all dreaming!
O Love Imperious that hast called me forth from out my
valley's shadow!

A mighty whirlwind, breath of the living God,
Sweeps from beyond the barricades of night, and, stooping
low,
Lifts me from out my dust and sets me free.
I feel the Power that moors me to Itself;
That keeps the rhythmic pattern of the stars;
That spins, like a fiery plaything in the air,

Louise Ayres Garnett

The earth that was my home.
My hour is great with leisure;
My day is manifest.
O clamorous world!—thy wasting fires
Have burned themselves to ashes.
O foolish pomp!—thy futile stride
As an image in a glass has passed away.
Time's mystery and menace are resolved:
The Now of Man is God's Forevermore.

My heart is as a forest treed with wonder.
The cymbals of my joyance make a stirring sound,
My singing shakes the day.
I know myself at last:
Thou, glorious One, hast revealed me to myself.
As new-born planets sang in ecstasy,
So sing the voices of my thankfulness.
I praise Thee!
I glorify Thee!
Thou art the Singer, man Thy Song;
My spirit on its summit shouts Thy name!
O Singer, Who hast sent me forth,
I am returned to Thee!

Louise Ayres Garnett

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE HOSTAGE

In dead of dark to his starry North
Saint Nicholas drew near—
He had ranged the world this wintry night,
His elk-bells jangling clear.
Now bitter-worn with age was he,
And weary of mankind, for few
Had shown him love or courtesy.

His sacks lay empty—all save one;
And this to his affright
Stirred as he stooped with fingers numb,
Ablaze with hoar-frost bright.
Aghast he stood. Showed fumbling thumb,
Small shoulder, a wing—what stowaway
Was this, and whence was 't come?

And out there crept a lovely Thing—
Half angel and half child:
“I, youngest of all Heaven, am here, to be thy joy,” he
smiled.
“O Nicholas, our Master Christ thy grief hath seen;
and He
Hath bidden me come to keep His tryst, and bring His
love to thee:
To serve thee well, and sing Nowell, and thine own son
to be.”

Walter de la Mare

SUPERNAL DIALOGUE

*Two beings
Stood on the edge of things—
Their breath was space,
And their eyes were suns.*

I It was this way he passed—
I know the sound.

II More worlds—
He can not forbear—

I Look down this lane—
It was dark till he passed.
Do you see—anything?

II Seeds of light—glowing, whirling—
A handful.

I Separating now.

II Fierce fire-balls—
So many—so many. Will he get what he wants—
The perfect flower?

I Flower of delight—to bloom beside his throne?
Sometime he will.

[A pause]

I Look—that little one—
Burning, aching—
Trailing its tiny orbs—

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

II Which one?

I See—scarlet—oh, alive!
Deep in that right-hand cluster near the dark.

II With tiny trailers—will it be one of them?
That clouded one, maybe?

I Look—it foams down.
The clouds lift—
There are seas—

II Lands—a creeping green—
Sounds of air moving.

I Hush—oh, whisper!—do you see
Dark specks that crawl?
And wings that flash in the air?

II Spawn—immeasurably minute.
What does he mean, the fecund one, creating without
reason or mercy?

I He must—life is his song.
He dreams—he wills.

II Watch now—they change, those atoms.
They stand on end—they lay stone on stone—
They go clad—they utter words.

I Proud—they take their spoil.
Kings—and slaves.

Harriet Monroe

II Oh queer—ingenious! They gather in towns,
They filch our fires to carry them over land and sea.

I They measure the stars—they love—they dream.

II But war—pain—obliterative war and pain.

I So brief—each one a tiny puff—and out.

II Grotesque!

I A few look up—salute us before they fall.
A few dare face him.

II Is it enough?
[*A pause*]

I It cools down—their whirling world.
It is silent—cold.

II Has he lost again? Can he fail?

I Who are we to question? Though he fail again and
again—

II Yes, who are we?

I He must go on—he must get the flower.

Two beings
Stood on the edge of things—
Their breath was space,
And their eyes were suns.

Harriet Monroe

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TWO NEGRO SPIRITUALS

A DREAM

I had a dream last night, a wonderful dream.
I saw an angel riding in a chariot—
Oh, my honey, it was a lovely chariot,
Shining like the sun when noon is on the earth.
I saw his wings spreading from moon to earth;
I saw a crown of stars upon his forehead;
I saw his robes agleaming like his chariot.
I bowed my head and let the angel pass,
Because no man can look on Glory's work;
I bowed my head and trembled in my limbs,
Because I stood on ground of holiness.
I heard the angel in the chariot singing:
 "Hallelujah early in the morning!
 I know my Redeemer liveth—
 How is it with your soul?"

I stood on ground of holiness and bowed;
The River Jordan flowed past my feet
As the angel soothed my soul with song,
A song of wonderful sweetness.
I stooped and washed my soul in Jordan's stream
Ere my Redeemer came to take me home;
I stooped and washed my soul in waters pure
As the breathing of a new-born child

Fenton Johnson

Lying on a mammy's breast at night.
I looked and saw the angel descending
And a crown of stars was in his hand:
"Be ye not amazed, good friend," he said,
"I bring a diadem of righteousness,
A covenant from the Lord of life,
That in the morning you will see
Eternal streets of gold and pearl aglow
And be with me in blessed Paradise."

The vision faded. I awoke and heard
A mocking-bird upon my window-sill.

THE WONDERFUL MORNING

When it is morning in the cornfield
I am to go and meet my Jesus
 Riding on His white horse.
When it is morning in the cornfield
I am to be there in my glory.
 Shout, my brethren! Shout, my sisters!
I am to meet the King of Morning
 Way down in the cornfield.

Fenton Johnson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

HANDFUL OF ASHES

THE CAPTIVE

Beauty that shakes in lights,
Beauty that gleams in mists,
Loveliness of still nights,
Gold of the stars that twists,
Ribbon-like, into the sea . . .
Beauty is calling me.

Delicate crimson flames,
Jewels with long histories,
Mysterious oft-said names,
Blossoms beneath great trees,
Melodies deep and low,
Call me. I can not go.

Heliotrope, jasmine, rose;
Lovers, at crumbling gates;
Silence, when eyelids close;
Cliffs, where the sea-bird mates:
Beauty holds these for me
Whose eyes are too blind to see.

Beauty, when sunbeams blur,
Calls me again and again.
I can not answer her.
Beauty shall call me in vain,

[130]

Dorothy Dow

Sadly, from year to year . . .
Passion has chained me here.

WAITING

If you should walk in the park and not find me,
Or go in the market-place and not see me,
Would you not search further?
Does not your heart tell you I am somewhere?
Go out on the long roads—I may be at the end of one.

The sea to the ship,
The river to the little boat,
The cloud to the swallow—
One for the other, always.
And I, for you, forever.

FUTILITY

The nights grow long and the days cold—
I dream of you and love.
The dead leaf, falling from the tree,
Is not more sad than memory;
Nor is the rising wind as bold
As were your lips on me. . . .
(What are you thinking of?)

The streets and trees and people pass
Like words beneath my pen;

[131]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Symbols, below a painted sky—
I have no part in them. I lie
Futile as footsteps on the grass.
Wind-torn, storm-drenched; I long to die.
(You might remember . . . then.)

BOUND

Take away the magic
You have put on me:
I am held by whispers—
I, who would be free.

I who would be free and false,
Why must I be true?
I fear to move, for hurting
The clinging thoughts of you.

So the sunny branches
Beckon me in vain:
I, beside the hearth-fire,
Huddle to my pain.

Dorothy Dow

FROM A BAY-WINDOW

*My world is a pane of glass. These only
Of the shadowy without are mine:
They that pass;
The gray birds fluttering by;
The cloud that sometimes sails
Over the chimney-bitten sky,
When all else fails.*

AUTUMN RAIN

To eyes hollow
With the gray distress
The passing swallow
Is all but a caress.

STEEPLES

They gaily pass
Within
Who would be freed (*en masse*)
Of sin.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

Up flutters a hand to caress—
Midway in the prayer—
Her Sabbath dress,
The frail gray of her hair.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TO A DEAD LOVE

Why, O love,
Shall I not sing,
Who above her child
Would plant a flowering thing?

TO FELIX

Clear as water pooled in a cup
I hear your thoughts
Through all the spaciousness of my unrest.
You have no place
For the white bird at my breast,
Or the face your hands lift up.

APRIL SNOW

Oh, your words are bitter to me
As these last flakes of snow are
To the little shining buds; but no bud
That glistens like a raindrop on a tree
Is so fresh with love.

SOLACE

Knock at my pane
With your finger-tips,
O rain.

Pearl Andelson

BEACH SONG

What are they weaving under the water?
They make sheer laces and drag them down.
They ruffle a lawn with a great grieving.
What are they making—what manner of gown?

What are they weaving, caught here,
Caught there, on the thin-washed blue?
Who is to be married or who is to be buried,
Under the water, under the water?

SONG ON DEATH

Death comes inexorably. His pale deft hand
Is never still. Swift and impalpable
He comes, taking what he will. Life is a circle
Which has gone its round. He tarries
Where old women sit, peering at the ground.

OUT OF A CAVALCADE OF DUST

In such a white procession,
In such a guise,
The dead might return
With pantomime of lips and eyes.

Pearl Andelson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

GREY CRUST

I am weary, unto desire of death,
Of the thought fretting in my body,
Of the body wrapped round my thought.

They go—
The curious panting creatures I would be—
Along the grey crust of the street.

I would be fused into her—
Girl going whither I know not!
I would have her shrill eager breasts—
Gusts of storm driving the sail of her blouse;
Her round polished knees, rising, moving like pendulums—
Engines urging the sail of her skirt;
Her sharp bird-like head cleaving the sail of the wind.
I would have the curious blood of her,
I would have her dream.

I would be fused into him—
Child carried in the arms of a mother,
Child carried whither he knows not!—
I would have the gurgling mirth
Emanating from gay-colored baubles;
The shiver, the sweat and the nightmare
Emanating from dark wrangling shadows:
I would have his untinted history,

[136]

Laurence Vail

And the hunger
To seize the whole world by the mouth.

I would be fused into anyone going new ways.

Laurence Vail

TWO POEMS

WILL POWER

I would rather grind my teeth to powder,
I would rather tread barefoot on thin, sharp stones,
I would rather let the blood of my veins freeze to red ice,
And the muscles of my legs stiffen to cold stone,
 Than be drawn by the warm breath
 Of transient things.

I would rather—

But . . . yet . . .

I am being drawn . . . I am being drawn . . .

PAIN

It is

The hush that falls

When screaming chords, drawn taut,

Break with a sudden snap!—and then

Recoil.

Henry Saul Zolinsky

[137]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ARPEGGIO

September

The bamboo stalks quiver—
Only one sways toward the moon face.

October

Spider telegraph wires
Flash from oak to sage!

November

Blackbirds printed on the sky.
Quick!—erase them for another print!

December

Tumble-weeds rolling 'cross lots,
And tumble-weed clouds on the mountain!
Winifred Waldron

SEMPER EADEM

Cheeks that are sunk and ashen,
Eyes that weep in vain:
Always the same passion
In the same futile fashion,
And the same pain—
Forever begun again.

Paul Tanaquil

[138]

NEURIADE

LAKE

Sitting on a bench facing God's beautiful lake,
A poem to God beautiful.

Lake Michigan,
The love a poor sick body held
(Sifted by the sift of a hundred nights of pain),
A poor sick body gave it all to you.

Your absinthe
Has intoxicated me.

Having risen out of your waters,
In front of my great eyes now
There is a mad blur of sunlight,
And the City spread out before me calling from a great
curve:

"Come, enter, conquistador!"

The line of your horizon, pure and long, hitched to the
infinite both ways,
Where the mist lies like Peace.

Swimming, I flirted with Death;
Saw death running over the shadow-laced ripples;
And turned around, as you threw water in my eyes,
And laughed at Death, as Death's brother, the devil,
would.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

You slammed open the doors of the sky,
And there stood the tremendous sun.

Lake, gilded in the morning,
I have come out of you,
A fresh-water Neptune;
And the water rang little bells
Trickling down
Along my flesh.

Lake, garden of the colors,
Sweet-breathing mouth of Chicago,
Words die in the fingers of a sick man,
As children dying on a poor father.
Take my promise, lake.

SLEEP

At the bottom of the abyss of sleep
A black cradle rocks.
Pain, slight, with evanescent fingers
Pushes it.
Under the cradle is earth,
To cover and stifle you.

AUBADE

The morning now
Is a white corpse—
The nightmares

[140]

Killed her.
Vainly the breeze
Wafts a terrible sadness
Over her body.

ENCOUNTER

Little grey lady sitting by the roadside in the cold,
My fire is to warm you, not to burn you up.

Little grey lady in your little grey house in the warmth,
Your warmth is to loosen my frozen arms and tongue,
Not to drowse me.

SERMON

Chao-Mong-Mu freely laid his hands over the sky:
You do not know how to lay your hands over the breasts
of your beloved.

Chao-Mong-Mu made the tree dance at his will:
You do not know how to hug a rough tree and say
“darling” to it.

Chao-Mong-Mu magnificently ran a shaft of sunlight to
smash against the treetops:
You walk carefully, carefully, and fend off the sunlight
with your grey clothes, although you're very poor.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Chao-Mong-Mu painted a sky that was a pink-fleshed
vase; then he became a very small thing and hid in
the vase:

You build yourselves immense houses to live in, and you
are afraid even there.

HOPE

Tomorrow will be beautiful,
For tomorrow comes out of the lake.

INSOMNIA

For a year his desperate hands beat the darkness. Then
out of their rhythm a monster was created:
Three claws on his breast, so that he could not with
facility heave it;
Three claws on his skull, so that he had waking night-
mares the year long.
When at last his hands dropped, the monster stooped
over him, and with his yellow beak plucked out his
white heart.

SMOKE

All the smoke of the cigarettes of dreamers went over
to the sky, and formed that blue vault you see up
there.

Emanuel Carnevali

FUNERAL MARCH

The great corpse
Is the crowd.

A whole day
It takes to bury it.

In the morning
They begin;

Not at night,
For they're afraid.

I'm here for . . .
Oh, to wail a great goodbye.

ITALIAN SONG

Until your lips be red,
Until the winter-time,
Until the money be gone,
Until God see us:
Until God see us.

Until old age come, girl,
Until the other man come,
Until the jettatura get me,
Until God see us:
Until God see us.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

OLD ACCUSTOMED IMPUDENT GHOST

That morning the dawn arose from the sodden grey city
pavements,

And it was a sick grey breath.

I had spent myself asking the night for sleep.

Broken in pieces I was—only the evil spirit was whole
in me;

There was a curse on my bitten bloody lips. . . .

And then . . .

Oh, then the old accustomed, impudent ghost came in:

He wore my bagged, ragged pants, and was unshaven;

And his face was the one I had seen in the mirror

Too many times.

INVOCATION TO DEATH

Let me

Close my eyes tight.

Still my arms,

Let me

Be.

Then,

Come!

Let me be utterly alone:

Do not let the awful understanding that comes with

The thought of Death

Bother me.

Emanuel Carnevali

Your love was not strong enough to hold me.

Death takes things away:
I have them here in my hands,
The rags.

I do not understand the cosmic humor
That lets foolish impossibilities, like me, live.

I have made a mess of it,
But I am no debtor.

It's the yearning of a nervous man,
The yearning for peace,
The curiosity for a word:
Forever.

If She would only come quietly,
Like a lady—
The first lady and the last.

Just not to hear any longer
The noise swelling from the morning streets,
Nor the two desperate sparrows chirruping;
Just not to fear any longer
The landlady.

Emanuel Carnevali

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

RENEWAL OF YOUTH

THE Christmas season, winter-clad as it is, always utters the prophecy of youth. Celebrating the birth of a great renewer of life, it rings the first far-away bell, waves the first red-and-green banner, to usher in the springtime. It reminds us of the perennial miracle, the unconquerable hope and joy forever freshly blooming in the new life of this earth.

The passage of the generations—that is the great poem. The long epic of birth, growth and decay—the struggle of life to assert its dominion over destructive forces, the momentary conquest and the final defeat—this is the universal story of which all lesser tales are mere chapters and paragraphs. Absorbed in our small affairs, singing our individual little solos, we too often miss the immense chorus vibrating grandly through the ages—a chorus which accepts and harmonizes the whirl of the cricket and the long drum-roll of the stars.

Life's bitter and unceasing fight is against the forces of decay: when it lapses, and turns to fight the forces of growth, the result is confusion and disaster. Through the battering by young minds alone may each generation forget to grow old; therefore let youth be free and strong, let it have room for its race and its shout, lest bars and shackles enslave the next age.

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Renewal of Youth

The battering by young minds—perhaps an editor's office, especially a poetry-editor's office, is the place most accessible of all to such battering, the place where some of the freest and strongest of young minds love to put up their first stiff fight against the forces of decay. Too often they find these forces entrenched in the editorial chair, so that the battlefield is conveniently narrowed down and the issue personified. And the editor, if he waives all advantage of position, age, experience, etc., will have to put up the best fight he is capable of, and often come out second-best at the end of it.

A recent article on *This Youngest Generation* by Malcolm Cowley (*New York Evening Post Literary Review* of October 15th) shows with what a simple gesture the young mind can throw away the immediate past—at least of its own race and language. Youth must avenge itself, not on the honored dead, but on the too-much-honored living; and so we find Shaw and Wells and Mencken and all the Georgian poets and prosers—and, oh yes, Chesterton and Schnitzler and Nathan—cast into the discard, while youth is reading Flaubert and Laforgue and Huysmans, diving deeper into the past toward Swift and Defoe, Racine, Molière, even Marlowe, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, and then coming up again to salute Remy de Gourmont and certain new groups of French poets to whom he showed the way. Through all this the young writers are shaping their own ideals: there is to be “a new interest in form,” “a simplification of current

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

life into something rich and strange"; "our younger literature will be at least as well composed as a good landscape—it may even attain to the logical organization of music."

Form, simplification, strangeness, respect for literature as an art with traditions, abstractness—these are the catchwords that are repeated most often among the younger writers. They represent ideas that have characterized French literature hitherto, rather than English or American. They are the nearest approach to articulate doctrine of a generation without a school and without a manifesto.

Le roi est mort, but he has prepared the people for the new reign:

The great advantage of this generation is the fact that a public has been formed. It has been formed exactly by those inchoate realists, like Dreiser, and by those anti-Puritanical critics, like H. L. Mencken, against whom this youngest generation is in revolt. But gratitude is not a literary virtue.

Yes, here as elsewhere gratitude is the rarest of the—shall we say, not virtues, but graces? It is an education in a still rarer virtue, and grace—humility, to note how easily the rising generation puts the risen one in its place. Shaw, Mencken, Dreiser—how they pawed the ground and trod the air not so long ago! What rebels, iconoclasts they were as they leapt all barriers toward the glamorous goal of art! Now conquering youth is mounted—soon he will ride them down with joy. *Le roi est mort*—for what happy heir shall we soon be shouting, "*Vive le roi!*"?

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Renewal of Youth

Yes, the wave-movement of the arts is one phase of the universal epic. Birth, growth, decay; new birth, fresh growth, and yet at last decay—the rule is for you and me as well as another, and in each of us it is proved. So hail to conquering Youth—even to sacred Infancy in its mother's arms! May the newly risen or newly born solve the riddles and sing the songs of the world! May he rid the earth of war and disease, of poverty and ignorance—famine of body and soul! May he complete nature's beauty with the beauty of art, and nature's truth with the truth of the spirit, and lead on the millennium to which we all aspire!

H. M.

ALEXANDER BLOK

Alexander Blok's death in the late summer is a loss not only to Russia but to world-literature. He was forty-one years of age, and had achieved international fame only during the last two years through the circulation of his revolutionary lyric, *The Twelve*. He was the first distinguished Russian writer to espouse openly the Bolshevist cause, and was one of the few first-rate imaginations which seem to have been sufficiently nourished upon the black bread of revolution. In his youth he was a writer of intense and remote lyrics, full of mystic vision and the pungent odor of the flowers of evil. The translators point out that Blok "owed a cultural allegiance to the old order." But he had from the first, like the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

typical Russian peasant, adored the Christ hanging in tormented effigy at the wind-raked cross-roads, and marching before the poor, their Brother of compassion; and it was inevitable that Blok should not despair of the blind, violent, but spiritual people, discovering in their wild fury the elements of redemption.

For the world of intellectual irony seemed to him rotten and ready for destruction. The nineteenth century, he wrote, "has cast upon the living face of man a blinding mask of mechanics, positivism, and economic materialism, and has drowned the human voice in the rumble and roar of machinery." As to whether Blok felt before he died that the administrators of this revolution were betraying their ideal, "loving Her in heaven and betraying Her on earth," opinions seem to differ. Certainly there is little likeness between the cold, dedicated Cromwellian executives who now direct the Soviet government, and the twelve mystic roisterers of Blok's *The Twelve*, written in 1918.

This poem, the Russian edition of which exceeded two million copies, was recently translated by Miss Deutsch and Dr. Yarmolinsky. It portrays the procession, through the streets of Red Petrograd, of twelve holy ruffians, looting, killing, singing. The scheme of the poem is bold and flexible, including revolutionary songs, an episode of low passion and jealousy terminated by murder, and penetrating lyric passages with a movement like the folk-song. There is occasional convincing

Alexander Blok

symbolism, as when the old order is personified by a mangy cur: "Beatings are the best you'll get." Behind all the lurid light and noise is the huge bare vision, the flat endless unmoved steppe:

Hutted Russia
Thick-rumped and solid—
Russia, the stolid.

In the storm and cold the blackguards stumble on, like disciples of a starved gray-bearded introspective Dionysus. At the end of the poem, they meet their master, inscrutable, pitying, crowned with flowers—the white untouched Christ, bearing the red flag:

In mist-white roses garlanded,
Christ marches on. The twelve are led.

The Twelve is a stirring battle-song which will not soon be dissociated from the history of these mysterious blood-dripping days. The translation, while it gives little impression of beauty as English verse, permits the smoky fire of the original to shine through.

Glenway Wescott

REVIEWS

A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS

Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

If I could only sound a fanfare in words! If I could get up on some high place and blow trumpets, and shout

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

and wave my hands and throw my hat! If, too, I could gather together all those of my dear friends who have said: "Oh yes, I like poetry well enough—Longfellow, and Byron and those; of course I admit I can't understand this modern stuff!" And if I could gather together all the shrugging shoulders, all the supercilious smiles, and all those brows which have knitted at the mention of poetry, and could read to them—or get Edna St. Vincent Millay to read to them, if it were only possible!—her latest book, *Second April*! And then if I could give it to all those hungry people who have not the money for beauty, and give it to children—even be generous with it!—and let it lie on the library table of the fashionable house, beside the *Golden Treasury*, where it might be picked up by the casual caller so that he would get drunk in a new way! And later, after the shy emotions and the jaded ones have had their dance in the sun, if I could get away to some deserted place of beauty, and hold a solitary revel, an orgy of poetry!

And yet even if the copies of *Second April* rained down like manna, I suppose there would still be some, among the most needy, to spurn the fare, some who would look, and look in vain, for intricacies of form, for startling words, for grotesque similes, for splashing impressionistic phrases. And there would be those who would think an occasional sonnet indecent, because it flings high, unashamed, the joy of living!

Not with libation, but with shouts and laughter

A Flourish of Trumpets

We drenched the altars of Love's sacred grove,
Shaking to earth green fruits, impatient after
The launching of the colored moths of Love.
Love's proper myrtle and his mother's zone
We bound about our irreligious brows,
And fettered him with garlands of our own,
And spread a banquet in his frugal house.
Not yet the god has spoken; but I fear,
Though we should break our bodies in his flame,
And pour our blood upon his altar, here
Henceforward is a grove without a name—
A pasture to the shaggy goats of Pan,
Whence flee forever a woman and a man.

Perhaps, there would be some to belittle the group of
memorial poems, each one of which is so childlike in its
simplicity—so utterly, utterly poignant:

Heap not on this mound
Roses that she loved so well;
Why bewilder her with roses,
That she cannot see or smell?
She is happy where she lies
With the dust upon her eyes.

And the stark tragedy of the *Chorus*:

Give away her gowns,
Give away her shoes;
She has no more use
For her fragrant gowns.
Take them all down—
Blue, green, blue,
Lilac, pink, blue—
From their padded hangers.
She will dance no more
In her narrow shoes;
Sweep her narrow shoes
From the closet floor.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And there would be the happy young girl who confided to me that she could not see anything particularly wonderful or apt in the sentence, "Life in itself is nothing—an empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs."

To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of the crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing—
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

Yet in spite of them all, and I believe there could only be a few—the meticulous, the unfortunates whose emotions have irretrievably atrophied—in spite of them, and right in their faces, I would shout aloud, blow trumpets, wave hands, and scatter Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Second April* over the world!

Marion Strobel

FLETCHERIAN COLORS

Breakers and Granite, by John Gould Fletcher. Macmillan Co.

This volume of poems, while not a definite attempt to comprehend and express the spirit of America, by combining various groups leaves a general impression. The spirit which speaks loudest, however, is a universal one, although our ardent patriotism usually leads us to confine it to America.

It is a palimpsest which no one reads or understands, which none has time to heed, a loom-frame woven over with interspersed entangled threads, of which the meaning is lost, from which the pattern is not yet freed.

They are a great shallow sea, crinkling uneasily as if some giant's body were wallowing beneath.

The shuttles clatter and clamor and hammer at the woof of day and night. But the being—the thing that will master all the ages—still refuses to be born.

One does not squeeze this essence from the book, but finds it imbedded in long descriptions, externally conceived; often with the eye of a decorator nicely designed, more often with the hand of an artisan who labors over his pile of adjectives and colors and leaves a jumble.

Down the Mississippi is the best group. It has a sculptural quality in spite of certain passages which, with their natural southern heat, threaten to melt the modeling into a mass. But it is an excellent group. A

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

fine conception of a great river, moulded and colored by sensitive hands, guided by sympathetic eyes.

Of his prose poems—*The Building of Chicago*, *The Old South* and *The Song of the Wind*—*The Old South* is the most completely satisfying. It has quality and cadence and flavor. It charms and saddens, and leaves a stagnant pool in the spirit. The other prose poems in the volume work out of inspiration hours. There are some interesting photographs, some historical descriptions. An effort is made at times to heighten them to the point of poetry by the use of the names of strong colors, but the words are cold, they do not flush from within. The lines are sterile, and hanging decorations on them does not make them burgeon.

In *New York*, this sentence begins well:

Ivory and gold, heart of light petrified, bold and immortally beautiful, lifts a tower like a full lily-stalk.

Then it grows hysterical:

With crammed pollen-coated petals, flame-calyx fretted and carven, white phoenix that beats its wings in the light, shrill ecstasy of leaping lines poised in flight, partaken of joy in the skies, mate of the sun.

We frequently encounter this violent use of language, but for the most part the poet's carousals in the names of colors fail to intoxicate him.

In *The Grand Canyon of The Colorado*

Yellow, red, grey-green, purple-black chasms fell swiftly below each other—

and

Fletcherian Colors

hammered from red sandstone, purple granite, and gold—
fail in their purpose, while

It was hidden
Behind layers of white silence

paints a picture.

Again, take from *The Well in the Desert*,

The desert below him seems burning: ashen-yellow,
red-yellow, faint blue and rose-brown—

and

At the horizon
The heat rose and fell,
Sharp flickering arpeggios . . .

Not a cloud-flake breaks with its shadow the great space
of sky and of earth.

The last two are Japanese prints, while the first is a colored photograph.

Mr. Fletcher's use of colors makes one feel their limitations; only occasionally does one feel their infinite variety.

The poems to the eye seem unrestrained, but there is not the flamboyant coloring of youth in these pages. Taking the volume as a whole, one feels a prodigal use of words of color but a paucity of colored words. If the Japanese prints, a few of which it undoubtedly possesses, were selected from the whole we should have a slimmer volume but a more rarely beautiful collection.

Laura Sherry

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MINOR CHORDS

Bluestone, by Marguerite Wilkinson. Macmillan Co.
Selected Poems, by Lady Margaret Sackville. E. P. Dutton
& Co.

These two books have no likeness of matter or manner that innately justifies their being written about together. My apology is that the authors of both are women, and that the books are both provided with prefaces so provocative that they stimulate attention perhaps more than the poetry itself.

Marguerite Wilkinson's preface is autobiographical, like her verses. It invites us into her workshop, as in her poems she invites us candidly into her homely house of life—into the kitchen and living-rooms and the empty nursery—to show us the vistas she likes, her porch and garden, her big husband, to chat a little about her ancestors and the poor and the weather, and to confide the mournful secret of her childlessness. In her workshop she lets us stand by while, between the stages of her demonstration of lyric-making, she gives an informal lecture.

To report the lecture briefly, for a summary may be made in a sentence—the poet may help himself by finding the tune which exists for each expression, and building them up together. She says:

What happens is simply this: While I am making a lyric, after the mood becomes clear, after the idea and image emerge from consciousness, I sing it, and sometimes slowly, sometimes quite rapidly, the words take their places in lines that carry a tune also. I am not giving conscious

effort to the tune; nor am I making an intellectual effort to combine words and music to get a certain effect. I am not thinking about the music. I am making a single-hearted and strong endeavor to say or sing what is felt or thought.

This leaves one well elbowed for reflection. Is this the way epics and folk-songs were written—did the bards and skalds and troubadours make their resonant verses thus? Is it analogous to the activities of any other poet—say Kreymborg, or Vachel Lindsay, in their somewhat readier improvisation?

As for the poems themselves, they are individually undistinguished. But a full sequential reading of them makes one aware of a bright, impulsive, open temperament, a small clear voice singing a small clear soul. It is frank and personal in the way that women are frank and personal, not a challenge but a confidence. It is autobiography as self-concerned and intimate, in its demure scale, as that of Benvenuto Cellini.

Mrs. Wilkinson writes most stridently, most rhetorically, when, as in the title-poem, she invokes ancestors. *Songs from beside Swift Rivers* is a pleasant, energetic group, although it contains the worst thing in the book, *The Really Truly Twirly-whirly Eel*. In *Preferences*, *Long Songs*, *Songs of an Empty House*, *Songs of Laughter and Tears*, *Whims for Poets* and *California Poems* she does better work. These in a certain way satisfy if they do not thrill us; they are, if not original, personal. Here she is busy on her autobiography; she tells a small old story, offers a bright comment.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The closing poem, however, *The Pageant*, is to my mind the finest of the book. It is almost the only impersonal poem. It is not new or profound; but it is a conceit such as comes coolly from the hands of women whereas men's hands mold sweatily and hard; also men's eyes are sneeringly careless while women's are maternally watchful. I will quote the second stanza, and take my leave of a book pleasant but not upsetting, containing some singularly inept verses which, however, may help in the final witnessing of an unheroic, untormented and engaging personality:

Forever is a broad road where have met together
Brave Deeds in red robes and Deeds of golden fire;
Grave Deeds in silver gowns, quaint Deeds in motley,
Quiet Deeds in homely gray that only saints admire;
Gentle Deeds that love the green raiment of the summer;
Pure Deeds in very white without the chill of snow;
Squalid Deeds in dull rags, pitiful and ugly:
Down the broad highway they go.

The testimonial to Lady Margaret Sackville's *Selected Poems* is written by no less a doctor than Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. It is short and perfunctory, having the familiar sound of the literary ballyhoo. It begins by calling her ladyship the best of England's woman poets. Being quite ignorant of the poetry young Britannia is writing, I cannot enter into controversy. But I remember some sharp work by the feminine Sitwell; and some interesting perceptions in quotations from Charlotte Mew; and even though the women of talent, like the men, are diluting their poetry in the traditional English schooner, the novel—Virginia Wolf, May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, E. M. Delafield

[160]

and others—there must be women who are writing poetry less pallid and Hellenic, and more original than this.

Mr. Blunt, like other comfortable people, is waiting for the world to quiet down to "its ancient bourgeois ways of peace, prosperity, romance, and beauty." We may look for the blooming of an art that will cover the ruins, a peaceful bourgeois poetry written in the benignant, lattice-tempered "daylight of sound rhyme, metre and melody," like Lady Sackville's. It will even be free from the rhetorical independence of blank verse, which is "not really verse at all even in master-hands; say, rather, a dignified kind of prose pompous in recitation and, for common reading, dull."

Mr. Blunt is sure it will emerge from the bewildered forms of the "delirium"—such profound, powerful, denying poetry as is being written by D. H. Lawrence, the imagists, the Sitwells and Aldous Huxley. I gather that Mr. Blunt means them although he mentions no names. Their work is a delirium to him because their subject-matter is not the Greek hash served up by a muse whom people have made a slavey, but fresh fodder pungently spiced that gives savor and nourishment; because their measures are ungentle, and their language cleaned and filtered of the débris of overlapping preciousities.

In spite of this survivor of the nineties, such feeble voices as Lady Sackville's will inevitably be silenced by the "delirium." True it is a voice of some subtle cadences; of a tone pleasing and serene. It even murmurs some

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

exquisite lyrics, offers some sonorous recitations, makes a shy jest. But it observes all the politeness of conventional rhyming; it never leaves its orderly park of cultivated flower-beds exhaling a luxurious odor, with nymphs and fauns pensive among the trees, fastened forever in the postures of elegantly sylvan courtship.

There is a staid, deliberate and wise sentiment in the war poems. They are not poignant or biographical, but they are pitying, even querulous, comments upon an organized cataclysm. They are bright bits of emotion, like bright colors against an elegant but monotonous background.

Lady Sackville's poetry has none of the impulse and swing of Marguerite Wilkinson's. It is impersonal and detached, and does not leave us as a palpable presence. But it has greater delicacy, mellower polish, maturer choice of material. One can see in these books an analogy; for England and America, if England did not have its own *r'voltés* and America its bland traditionalists.

Isidor Schneider

POST-MARTIAL EMOTION

Aurelia and Other Poems, by Robert Nichols. E. P. Dutton and Co.

From the ardors and endurances of war this poet, like many another, has retired into his sensibilities. It is a luxury no doubt justified in one who suffered so severe a war experience as Robert Nichols, but it is a disappoint-

ment to many who read his first book. From this earlier book there were two courses possible: one, to retain the war experience, if not its incidents, as a structural fact in his future work; the other, to throw it away as one would a soiled and bloody shirt and return to the cool, sterile delicacies of his domestic experience. With the exception of the beautifully reminiscent *Yesterday*, the poet in this book has returned frankly to pre-war psychology and subject matter. The book as a whole, including, *Four Idylls*, *Encounters*, twenty-seven Elizabethan *Sonnets to Aurelia*, *The Flower of Flame*, has assumed in manner, emotion and subject the conventional limitations of the finely wrought but minor poetry of academic England.

If war came without welcome, a thick and bulging episode in his experience, its subsidence at any rate has not left the poet voiceless. The transition from his engravings on the crude steel of war to their continuation on the ivory of peace is no doubt appropriate to this type of poet. Three strains of interest, none of them associated with warlike violence, may be noted: A contemplative and introspective interest, as in *Night Rhapsody*:

How beautiful to wake at night,
Within the room grown strange, and still, and sweet,
And live a century while in the dark
The dripping wheel of silence slowly turns;
To watch the window open on the night,
A dewy silent deep where nothing stirs,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And, lying thus, to feel dilate within
The press, the conflict, and the heavy pulse
Of incommunicable sad ecstasy.

An interest in nature observation, as in *From the Budded Branch*:

Below a beetle on a stalk of grass
Slowly unharnesses his shuttered wings,
His tiny rainbow wings of shrivelled glass.
He leaps! He whirs away. The grass-blade swings.

An interest in personal emotion, as in the tritely facile
Sonnets to Aurelia:

Whatever substances of love may dwell
Within the passionate heart of such as I,
Whatever waters of pure pity well
In the dark orb of a most loving eye,
I have yielded you. Whatever were the pain
If power within me so to do did live,
I, at your need, had made these yours again,
But now I know I have no more to give.

But the weaver of these has not yet a certain hand. His imaginative facility, his ability to subordinate the crude image to the structural idea of his poem without diminishing its vividness, his technical excellence in poetic detail, do not save him from casualness in the larger principles of his work.

It is unfortunate that Robert Nichols should have only the poised and static culture of his particular English group to support him. Rarely if ever does he break over the narrow boundaries of self-centered sophistication,

Post-martial Emotion

of fagged and too mature emotion. Mr. Nichols and his group seem to be too little in literary touch with the massive energies of contemporary life to be moved by any great or unifying poetic idea. The environment is luxuriously sweet to the minor poet, but its very graciousness undermines stronger men. It is too small a pot for great broth. In the gratuitous energy of great poetry this book is lacking.

Baker Brownell

COLOR SONATAS

Poems, by Iris Tree. John Lane Co.

An organ exists which plays in color instead of in tone and pitch. Its invention was a recognition of the synesthetic power which every artist to some extent possesses—the power to translate images received through one sense into terms of another sense.

If one could carry the principle of synesthesia inventively several steps farther than the color organ, and produce a device that would interpret sound in terms of fragrance, and color in terms of odor, and so on, one would have something very like Iris Tree's book. It is, to quote her own words, "a kaleidoscope of roaring color," using the word "color" itself in a rather synesthetic sense. Such figures as "scarlet rhapsodies and beryl-cold sonatas," "The pale smell of their falling blossoms," and "Its scent is sweeter than ghostly music," are characteristic.

Rebecca West, I believe, once referred to the works of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Compton Mackenzie as not precisely novels but brilliantly colored cushions. I have somewhat the same feeling about Iris Tree's volume—it does not seem exactly a book. It is not a cushion; sometimes it seems a tapestry, at other times a bouquet of highly perfumed flowers, and still again a series of ariettes. This is nothing against it; anybody can make a book that seems like a book, but few can make a book that seems like—well, perhaps “a kaleidoscope” is the most inclusive term. The author, in her own words, opens wide

the violet-petalled doors
Of every shy and cloistered sense
That all the scent and music of the world
May rush into the soul.

The poems are dazzling, arresting, with imagery now a bit Keatsian in suggestion, but more often altogether modern. Verses like these represent the author's method:

Moonlit lilacs under the window,
And the pale smell of their falling blossoms,
And the white floating beams like luminous moths
Fluttering from bloom to bloom.
Sprays of lilac flowers
Frothing at the green verge of midnight waves,
Frozen to motionless icicles.
Moonlight flows over me,
Full of illicit, marvelous perfumes
Wreathed with syringa and plaited with hyacinths;
Hair of the moonlight falling about me,
Straight and cool as the drooping tresses of rain.

The spiritual interpretations which the author makes are as unvivid as her imagery is vivid. Neither “the dim

psychic crystals" of her soul nor her wish that she were "God in a colored globe" moves one to more than casual interest. Perhaps this is partly because one looks for sensuous instead of spiritual beauties in a kaleidoscope.

Illustrations and decorations usually spoil a book of poems. In this case the decorations, done by Curtis Moffatt, the author's husband, have the same quality as the verses and add to their flavor.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

THE PREMATUREITY OF IMMATURITY

Hidden Path, by Ned Hungerford. Privately printed.

It is hard to call this the poetry of a young man. There is feeling and experience in it; it is immature not in knowledge of life but in the mechanics of expression, in the practice of poetic craftsmanship. Where other poets can amble and even trip gaily and gracefully, in well trodden and frequented ways, Mr. Hungerford plods lonely and stumbling. He presents almost pathetically the figure of a man desperately concerned with self-expression, not as a necessity born with him but out of some troubling circumstance. I feel that things are maddeningly dull for Mr. Hungerford, wherever he is; that he has an insuppressible desire to find a kinder environment.

That is why opening his book gave me the thrill that a man might feel if he picked up a stray message from a lost man—say, something in a bottle, or between the halves of a fruit. There is a distracting personal interest in

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

every poem that makes its status as poetry unimportant. And the regrettable element in the matter is that the author deliberately aims to achieve this effect. He writes in his introductory poem:

Reader . . .
That these poems are now in your hands
Is proof that they are meant for you.
Whatever your race, color, or creed, you are brother
To him who wrote them,
And to him who placed them in your hands.

It is the old plea of the beginner not sure of his audience, the old futile defiance of criticism, futile because of its unconscious confession of a lack of technique. Somewhere else in the book, he makes the stock challenge:

O ready condemners,
Isn't it just possible
You and I are thinking of something
Entirely different?

The persistent illusion of being misunderstood (when one is merely ignored), the illusion that others in his plight may take heart from his avowals, is the inspiration of a good many of these poems. Throughout, the reader is left with the consciousness of listening to a muddled eager man, who can hardly resist the temptation to buttonhole his few auditors. The very titles of this and a previous book—*Hidden Path, Uncertain Trail*—give Mr. Hungerford's own estimate of his literary journey.

If Ned Hungerford is comparatively young, he may find out eventually whither he is bound, in which case he

The Prematurity of Immaturity

will regret publishing this misgiven itinerary. If he is not a young man and is bogged fast in bewildering cross-roads, the book will be one more of the crowded minor fatalities on the literary front. From any standpoint it is premature; it may have satisfied momentarily a craving to appear in print, but already it must have obliterated that satisfaction by coming back in all its gruesome immaturity to haunt its author. It would have been passed over in silence; but as it is typical of many books of verse sent out in quest of reviews, the above remarks may serve as a hint to other self-deceived, and often embittered, would-be poets.

Isidor Schneider

CORRESPONDENCE

THE ALLIED ARTS AGAIN

I

Dear Editor: It was with great interest that I read in *POETRY* for October, your comments upon my *Musical America* article. I am glad to have the opportunity and the invitation to express an opinion I have long held.

I believe we should have something in the nature of a National Committee for the Protection of the Native Lyric from the Distortions Practised by Incompetent Composers. Poets, when asked for permission to make "settings" of their words, often grant it graciously and trust to luck. What a writer ought to do is to tell the

[169]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

composer to make a setting and submit it to him for approval. But as few poets are willing to profess expertness in musical judgments, the writer usually has to submit to whatever outrageous interpretation the composer may perpetrate. I see no reason why a poet should not say to a composer: "Yes, you may make a setting of my poem, provided that, before publishing it, you will submit it to a committee on which both poetry and music are represented." Such a committee would be a step toward establishing a standard, and perhaps it might do a great deal, in ways other than censorship, to stimulate the progress of American song.

One other thing might be spoken of as a possible reason why there is not greater co-operation among poets and musicians: often of late the poet talks business and proposes a division of royalty, whereupon the negotiations are soon at an end. There are different reasons in different cases, but usually this happens because the composer knows, if he has ever published anything, that the royalty will be too small to divide—a fact which he dislikes to confess, even to a fellow-artist. And he does not want to be forced to keep books and mail out each month a cheque which would probably fluctuate between two dollars and six. If there is money in music-publishing, the music-publisher must get most of it.

Referring again to your editorial, you express doubt whether I have taken the trouble to get acquainted with, or try to understand, contemporary poets. But

The Allied Arts Again

I can plead guilty only in part—I have not been able to keep pace with all our American poets, it is true, but I *have* known some of them, and I am eager to meet others and try to understand their art.

Instead of citing Carpenter's settings of the Tagore things in your editorial, you might more fitly have mentioned his use of *The Heart's Country*, by Florence Wilkinson; or the delightful song Henry Hadley made last year out of *When I Go Away from You*, by Amy Lowell.

Please let me say in conclusion that I never have said there were not fine American songs. But they *are* remarkably few, and remarkably hard to place effectively in a recital programme.

Charles Albert Case

Northampton, Mass.

II

Dear POETRY: To all serious students of the dance, the first sentence in your October article, "POETRY would like to celebrate its ninth birthday by inaugurating a closer affiliation with the allied arts of music and the drama—*perhaps also the dance,*" is encouraging. That "perhaps" is deserved: only those who come in daily contact with the too-popular belief that the door to real achievement may be kicked open by a perfectly pointed toe, can realize how far the dance has traveled from its dignified origin. In alliance with that music and poetry to which the dance really gave birth lies her only hope. Music and poetry give the dancer a reason for existence.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

We had the pleasure of working with Alfred Kreymborg in the summer of 1920, and not only felt that we, as dancers, had profited, but we gained an insight into, and a feeling for, the rhythm of modern poetry that nothing but the actual bodily expression of it could have given us. We have been fortunate also in being associated with a musician who has used pieces of Sara Teasdale's, Vachel Lindsay's, Bliss Carman's, and other moderns, as themes for dance-music.

Certainly poets, musicians and dancers need not fear to join forces. They have the fundamentals in common. With such different, yet harmonious, outward manifestations of those fundamentals, surely the result will not be unworthy of poetry or music, and will surely be of infinite value to the dance in its reinstatement among the arts.

We so often fail to say the pleasant things we think. POETRY is a monthly refreshment. It is like a breath from freshly opened flowers, or a drink of mountain water.

Bertha Wardell

Los Angeles, Cal.

Note by the Editor: Another correspondent reminds us that Rupert Hughes, well known both as novelist and composer, has used a number of modern lyrics: for example, one of the editor's own, *I Love my Life*, originally published in POETRY; and quite recently *Evening in the West*, or better *The Ivory Moment*, by John Drury, from the new Los Angeles monthly, *The Lyric West*. Schirmer & Co. are Mr. Hughes' publishers.

NOTES

Mr. Lew Sarett, of Chicago, or rather of her neighbor-city Evanston, has consented to act henceforth as a member of the Advisory Committee of POETRY. Mr. Sarett is the author of *Many Many Moons*; and the award of last month to his poem, *The Box of God*, makes him the latest winner of the Helen Haire Levinson Prize. He has been, for the last year, in the Public Speaking Department of Northwestern University.

In our advertising pages the Poetry Society of South Carolina makes an announcement of great interest to poets. A prize of \$250, donated by W. Van R. Whittall, Esq., of Pelham, N. Y., is to be awarded annually, under the Society's auspices, for the best poem sent in competition before Jan. 1st of each year. Mr. Pelham makes sure of a competent choice this year by appointing Miss Amy Lowell to the honor of initiating the award by acting as the first judge.

Louise Ayres Garnett (Mrs. Eugene H.), of Evanston, Ill., wrote the poem *Resurgam* as the text of an oratorio for which Mr. Henry Hadley is now composing the music. In our November *Correspondence* Mrs. Garnett told the story of this collaboration; and the complete work, which will soon be published, may be regarded as an essay in that closer alliance between poetry and music which the editor has pleaded for in recent numbers of POETRY.

Mrs. Garnett has published, through Rand, McNally & Co., three books of verse for children; and she wrote both words and music of *Creature Songs* (Oliver Ditson Co.). The Macmillan Co. published her play *Master Will of Stratford*, and *The Drama* has printed two or three of her plays for children.

Mr. Walter de la Mare, the well known English poet, is the author of numerous books of verse for adults and children; and his *Collected Poems—1901-1918* were published in a two-volume edition by Henry Holt & Co. in 1920.

Mr. Fenton Johnson, of Chicago, who stands *facile princeps* among living poets of his race, is the author of three small privately printed books of verse, the latest being *Songs of the Soil* (1916). He founded, and edited for some time *The Champion*, a magazine for Negroes, and he has been on the staff of *The Favorite Magazine*.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Mr. Emanuel Carnevali, of Chicago, has contributed verse and prose to most of the special magazines, but has not yet published a volume. In 1918 he received a Young Poet's Prize from POETRY.

Miss Winifred Waldron, of North Glendale, Cal., has printed poems in various magazines. "Paul Tanaquil" is a pseudonym.

Of the poets who have not hitherto appeared in POETRY:

Miss Pearl Andelson, of Chicago, was until recently a member of the Poetry Club of the University of Chicago, which has been a good training-school for a number of young poets.

Miss Dorothy Dow, of Winchester, Ill., has published little as yet.

Mr. Laurence Vail lives in New York.

Ditto Mr. Henry Saul Zolinsky, who, although only seventeen, has already been newsboy, bell-boy, office-boy, electrician, shoe-salesman and ad-solicitor; and who hopes to become a student again some day and finish his interrupted course at college.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Poems, by Claude Colleer Abbott. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.

Missing Links and Other Things, by Thomas F. McCarthy. Journal Publishing Co., Devil's Lake, N. D.

A Brochure of Verse, by Ralph S. Woodworth. Privately printed, Elkhart, Ind.

The Infant in the News-sheet: An Ode Against the Age, by Herman George Scheffauer. Overseas Pub. Co., Hamburg, Germany.

Pagan Love Lyrics, by Alfred Bryan. Privately printed.

Little Visits, by Raymond E. Manchester. F. W. Orth Co., Cuyahoga Falls, O.

Memorial Poems, by Henry Polk Lowenstein. Privately printed, Kansas City.

Every Day Poems, by George Elliston. Stewart Kidd Co., Cincinnati.

Golden Mud, by Glenn M. Coleman. Privately printed, Mt. Vernon, Ia.

Scattered Leaves, (3rd ed.), by Edward C. Wentworth. The Book-fellows, Chicago.

Shadows, by Susan Baker. Privately printed, Chicago.

(Other books received will be listed next month.)

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Of Poetry, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for October 1, 1921.

State of Illinois, County of Cook. Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Harriet Monroe, who, having been duly sworn according to law, depose and says that she is the editor of Poetry, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

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Further information will be furnished upon request by **DuBose Heyward, Secretary of the P.S.S.C., 76 Church St., Charleston, S. C.**

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Vol. XIX

No. IV

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A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe

January 1922

The Witch of Coos
by Robert Frost
Four Poems by
Wm. Carlos Williams
Marjorie Meeker
Glenn Ward Dresbach

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Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

Vol. XIX

No. IV

POETRY for JANUARY, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|-----------------------------|
| The Witch of Coös | Robert Frost 175 |
| Songs of Night | Marjorie Meeker 182 |
| Ode to Myself Trying to Sleep—In Darkness—By a Window | |
| —Song for a May Night—Color of Water—Lonely Sky and | |
| Sea—Comrades | |
| First Snow | Esther Louise Ruble 186 |
| Songs of the Plains | Glenn Ward Dresbach 187 |
| Two Poems | Grace Fallow Norton 190 |
| I Shall Remember—Shy Perfect Flower | |
| To Sappho | Julia R. Reynolds 191 |
| Irish Song | Helen Coale Crew 192 |
| On the Wing | Dorothy Keeley 193 |
| Four Poems | Ernest Walsh 194 |
| I Ask for a Friend—Sonnet—The Fickle Lover—Collapse | |
| Tableaux | Ellen Margaret Janson 196 |
| Scherzo—Tryst—Incense Smoke—Night in the City—The | |
| Unknown | |
| Poems | William Carlos Williams 200 |
| Wild Orchard—The Lonely Street—Spouts—The Widow's | |
| Lament in Springtime | |
| The Hope of Peace | H. M. 204 |
| Must Art Be Interesting? | Baker Brownell 206 |
| Reviews: | |
| A Symposium on Marianne Moore | H. M. 208 |
| A Mystic Warrior | Dorothy Dudley 216 |
| Mrs. Wylie's Poems | H. M. 220 |
| Thoughtful Measures | H. M. 222 |
| Our Contemporaries: | |
| New International Magazines | 224 |
| Various Prizes | 227 |
| Correspondence: | |
| A Letter from Paris | 228 |
| Notes and Books Received | 232, 233 |

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it.

JANUARY 1922

THE WITCH OF COOS

Circa 1922

I STAID the night for shelter at a farm
Behind the mountain, with a mother and son,
Two old-believers. They did all the talking.

The Mother

Folks think a witch who has familiar spirits
She *could* call up to pass a winter evening,
But *won't*, should be burned at the stake or something.
Summoning spirits isn't "Button, button,
Who's got the button," you're to understand.

The Son

Mother can make a common table rear
And kick with two legs like an army mule.

[175]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The Mother

And when I've done it, what good have I done?
Rather than tip a table for you, let me
Tell you what Ralle the Sioux Control once told me.
He said the dead had souls, but when I asked him
How that could be—I thought the dead were souls,
He broke my trance. Don't that make you suspicious
That there's something the dead are keeping back?
Yes, there's something the dead are keeping back.

The Son

You wouldn't want to tell him what we have
Up attic, mother?

The Mother

Bones—a skeleton.

The Son

But the headboard of mother's bed is pushed
Against the attic door: the door is nailed.
It's harmless. Mother hears it in the night
Halting perplexed behind the barrier
Of door and headboard. Where it wants to get
Is back into the cellar where it came from.

The Mother

We'll never let them, will we, son? We'll never!

The Son

It left the cellar forty years ago
And carried itself like a pile of dishes
Up one flight from the cellar to the kitchen,
Another from the kitchen to the bedroom,

Robert Frost

Another from the bedroom to the attic,
Right past both father and mother, and neither stopped
it.

Father had gone upstairs; mother was downstairs.
I was a baby: I don't know where I was.

The Mother

The only fault my husband found with me—
I went to sleep before I went to bed,
Especially in winter when the bed
Might just as well be ice and the clothes snow.
The night the bones came up the cellar-stairs
Toffile had gone to bed alone and left me,
But left an open door to cool the room off
So as to sort of turn me out of it.
I was just coming to myself enough
To wonder where the cold was coming from,
When I heard Toffile upstairs in the bedroom
And thought I heard him downstairs in the cellar.
The board we had laid down to walk dry-shod on
When there was water in the cellar in spring
Struck the hard cellar bottom. And then someone
Began the stairs, two footsteps for each step,
The way a man with one leg and a crutch,
Or little child, comes up. It wasn't Toffile:
It wasn't anyone who could be there.
The bulkhead double-doors were double-locked
And swollen tight and buried under snow.
The cellar windows were banked up with sawdust

[177]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And swollen tight and buried under snow.
It was the bones. I knew them—and good reason.
My first impulse was to get to the knob
And hold the door. But the bones didn't try
The door; they halted helpless on the landing,
Waiting for things to happen in their favor.
The faintest restless rustling ran all through them.
I never could have done the thing I did
If the wish hadn't been too strong in me
To see how they were mounted for this walk.
I had a vision of them put together
Not like a man, but like a chandelier.
So suddenly I flung the door wide on him.
A moment he stood balancing with emotion,
And all but lost himself. (A tongue of fire
Flashed out and licked along his upper teeth.
Smoke rolled inside the sockets of his eyes.)
Then he came at me with one hand outstretched,
The way he did in life once; but this time
I struck the hand off brittle on the floor,
And fell back from him on the floor myself.
The finger-pieces slid in all directions.
(Where did I see one of those pieces lately?
Hand me my button-box—it must be there.)

I sat up on the floor and shouted, "Toffle,
It's coming up to you." It had its choice
Of the door to the cellar or the hall.

[178]

Robert Frost

It took the hall door for the novelty,
And set off briskly for so slow a thing,
Still going every which way in the joints, though,
So that it looked like lightning or a scribble,
From the slap I had just now given its hand.
I listened till it almost climbed the stairs
From the hall to the only finished bedroom,
Before I got up to do anything;
Then ran and shouted, "Shut the bedroom door,
Toffile, for my sake!" "Company," he said,
"Don't make me get up; I'm too warm in bed."
So lying forward weakly on the handrail
I pushed myself upstairs, and in the light
(The kitchen had been dark) I had to own
I could see nothing. "Toffile, I don't see it.
It's with us in the room, though. It's the bones."
"What bones?" "The cellar bones—out of the grave."

That made him throw his bare legs out of bed
And sit up by me and take hold of me.
I wanted to put out the light and see
If I could see it, or else mow the room,
With our arms at the level of our knees,
And bring the chalk-pile down. "I'll tell you what—
It's looking for another door to try.
The uncommonly deep snow has made him think
Of his old song, *The Wild Colonial Boy*,
He always used to sing along the tote-road.

[179]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

He's after an open door to get out-doors.
Let's trap him with an open door up attic."
Toffile agreed to that, and sure enough,
Almost the moment he was given an opening,
The steps began to climb the attic stairs.
I heard them. Toffile didn't seem to hear them.
"Quick!" I slammed to the door and held the knob.
"Toffile, get nails." I made him nail the door shut,
And push the headboard of the bed against it.

Then we asked was there anything
Up attic that we'd ever want again.
The attic was less to us than the cellar.
If the bones liked the attic, let them like it,
Let them *stay* in the attic. When they sometimes
Come down the stairs at night and stand perplexed
Behind the door and headboard of the bed,
Brushing their chalky skull with chalky fingers,
With sounds like the dry rattling of a shutter,
That's what I sit up in the dark to say—
To no one any more since Toffile died.
Let them stay in the attic since they went there.
I promised Toffile to be cruel to them
For helping them be cruel once to him.

The Son

We think they had a grave down in the cellar.

The Mother

We know they had a grave down in the cellar.

Robert Frost

The Son

We never could find out whose bones they were.

The Mother

Yes, we could too, son. Tell the truth for once.

They were a man's his father killed for me.

I mean a man he killed instead of me.

The least I could do was help dig their grave.

We were about it one night in the cellar.

Son knows the story: but 'twas not for him

To tell the truth, suppose the time had come.

Son looks surprised to see me end a lie

We'd kept up all these years between ourselves

So as to have it ready for outsiders.

But tonight I don't care enough to lie—

I don't remember why I ever cared.

Toffile, if he were here, I don't believe

Could tell you why he ever cared himself. . . .

She hadn't found the finger-bone she wanted

Among the buttons poured out in her lap.

I verified the name next morning: Toffile.

The rural letter-box said Toffile Barre.

Robert Frost

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SONGS OF NIGHT

ODE TO MYSELF TRYING TO SLEEP

Draw in the threads of thought—
Each delicate filament,
Reaching into too many places,
Finding forgotten faces . . .
Draw in the long twisting thoughts you have sent.

Strange, that you lie here wondering
About things that don't matter;
Strange, that you lie here pondering . . .
And outside, the raindrops patter,
A fog is on the town,
And over the river
The drenched lights cross and quiver,
And the far harsh rumble of trams goes up and down.

Once, like a wind, beauty swept through you;
Once, like a small song that sings and sings,
Happiness crept through you;
Once, love seemed the reason for things;
And once you thought
Peace had come upon you . . .

And then all came to naught.

Draw in the threads of thought—
Each delicate filament,

[182]

Marjorie Meeker

Quivering and bright;
Draw in the long twisting thoughts you have sent.
Cast all the tangled old dreaming and groping
To the still, deep,
Strange heart of Night
(Gentle forever to all grieving and hoping)—
And sleep.

IN DARKNESS

Deep in the heart of darkness I am lying,
Alone and still;
And all the winds of darkness and of silence
Work their will,

Blowing about me through the awful spaces
Of night and death;
Nor all immensity can touch or thrill me
To thought or breath.

Deep in the heart of darkness I am dreaming,
Quiet, alone,
Careless alike of tender words or cruel—
Even your own.

BY A WINDOW

The owl and the bat
Are alone in the night—

[183]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

What are they at
By the dead moon's light?
Hush! How the wings of the black bat whirl!
(Oh hush, for the sleepers moan and stir!)

The moon is bleak,
Like a monk in a cowl . . .
What do they seek,
The bat and the owl?
What danger brews in the night, what sin?
(But hush, for the sleepers dream within.)

SONG FOR A MAY NIGHT

Heigho!
Many mysterious things I know!

I know why the moon is like a moth—
Do you?
I know why stars are many, and suns
Are few.
I know a place where a star fell down,
And made a hole in the middle of town,
And all the people jumped in. And so—
Heigho!

Other mysterious things I know!

Marjorie Meeker

COLOR OF WATER

You will be the color of water;
Your voice will be like the wind;
You will go where the dust goes;
None will know you have sinned.

None will know you are quiet,
Or fluent, or bound, or free;
None will care you are nothing;
You will be nothing to me.

Except a scarlet remembrance . . .
As if, in a dream of pride,
A poppy had flaunted her petals
One day to the sun, and died.

LONELY SKY AND SEA

O lonely, lonely sky and sea—
Where time is a wind that plays between,
Blowing the colored centuries by,
Tiny tragedies, quaint and mean—

Why are you waiting? What have you heard?
What majestic thing have you known,
That you watch each other, listening,
So long, so long alone?

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMRADES

Time sweeps through me like a wind;
Space engulfs me like a sea.
Time and Space are at me always—
They will not let me be.

I am weary, weary with years,
Troubled by immensity.
With eternities around me,
How can I be free?

Marjorie Meeker

FIRST SNOW

The night was hiding a secret
When it stole
Through the red gates of sunset,
Coming so silently.
We heard it whispering
To the bare trees.

And while we wondered,
The white souls of the autumn leaves
Came softly back,
Drifting, drifting.

Esther Louise Ruble

[186]

SONGS OF THE PLAINS

I

There's no hiding here in the glare of the desert—
If your coat is sham the sun shines through.
Here with the lonely things and the silence
There is no crowd for saving you.

When hearts love here the love lasts longer,
And hate leaves here a heavy scar.
But we, with the desert's beauty of distance,
Are always dreaming of places far!

If you have come to start a kingdom—
Our eyes have looked on Rome and Tyre!
But if you come with dreams for baggage,
Sit with us by the cedar fire!

II

The sultry sudden darkness,
Like some black mantle thrown
From shoulders of a giant
On children left alone,
Falls over us; and, stilled with fear,
In dark we see, in silence hear!

Then rain!—a sudden pounding
Of unformed maddened things,

[187]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Pounding, splashing—stubborn
As vultures' heavy wings
That pound the air, too sure to hate,
In hunger, and move low, and wait!

III

Four old trees stand tall on a hill.
Wind swirls around them, never still;
And their heads together bow and sway
As if in talk of a game they play.
Sometimes they laugh and sometimes sigh;
And there beneath a low gray sky
I've seen them drop their leaves when thins
The gold and crimson, as near dawn
Wise gamblers drop their cards upon
The table, saying kindly, "Why
Quarrel with a game that no one wins!"

IV

The wood was so old that I thought
I'd hear it saying its prayers
In the aisles like cloisters wrought;
But I came on it, unawares,
Chuckling—like old men mellow grown—
Talking of youth on a hill alone!

[188]

Glenn Ward Dresbach

V

The birds love you too,
 Calling, "Sweet, sweet, sweet!"
In the windy lane
 Where the tree-tops meet.

But I love you best,
 Since my lips let pass
No song lest I miss
 Your steps on the grass.

VI

I'll go where willows quicken
 Their dances in the glow
Of morning, and the wild brooks
 Make music down below;
For I am weary seeking
 The things I may not know.

And I shall feel the silver
 Of willow leaves, and hold
A drop of water winking
 With rainbows yet unsold.
What more may all the world find
 Now all its dreams are old!

Glenn Ward Dresbach

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TWO POEMS

I SHALL REMEMBER

Open to me the door of heaven
For an hour, an hour!
Let me pace the floor of heaven,
Let me pluck one flower!

Forever and forever heaven
Will live upon my lips.
I shall remember. Never heaven
Shall fail my seeking ships.

I shall be shod and swathed with heaven—
Ah, the blue filmy veil—
Because for an hour I bathed in heaven
Whose winds hurt and heal.

I shall remember. Songs of heaven,
I shall sing them still;
Like the silver throngs of heaven
I shall have heaven's will.

So open to me the door of heaven
For an hour, an hour!
Let me breathe the air of heaven,
Let me pluck one flower!

[190]

Grace Fallow Norton

SHY PERFECT FLOWER

Shy perfect pearl-white flower, blooming alone
In northern woods where snow has sown
Its myriad seed—shy perfect flower,
Fragrant, alone—
Your dark leaves cluster close to hide you the more.

I part them and remember bright poppies on the plain.
They run in the wind, a ragged gypsy train;
They fling themselves at the feet of the golden grain—
When it is slain they too are slain.
Their life is a cry! Their life is a sudden scarlet stain!
Their dream-dark seeds have fearful power.

And you, shy perfect pearl-white flower?

Grace Fallow Norton

TO SAPPHO

Torn fragments of your woven words I read;
And less their throbbing cry has power to stir
My passion than to soothe me to strange peace,
Remembering the long silence fallen on you.

Julia R. Reynolds

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

IRISH SONG

Where the highway steps along
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
I gave my feet the choice o' way, wherever they would
 roam.

They might have marched to Londonderry, Belfast,
 Dublin . . .

The foolish, eager feet o' me, they marched straight home!

The little gown o' blue you wore
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
Cried out to me, *Come in! Come in!* Your apron it said,
 Stay!

The tying o' the plaid shawl across the warm heart o' you
Tied in-along the heart o' me—I couldn't get away.

I took off my wander-shoes,
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
The highway stepped along alone, until it slipped from
 view.

I laid aside my dusty dreams, hung up my ragged lifetime,
And rested feet and heart o' me before the sight o' you!

Helen Coale Crew

ON THE WING

A wind that blows from the sea, and smells
Of spring and fall together,
Runs racing up the yellow fields
Into the autumn weather.

And I run too, for I am young
And breathless with all living—
The trees are shouting as we pass,
The asters singing in the grass.

In half an hundred years from now,
When all my songs are sung,
I'll not be old and crossly sage,
I'll love the bright hill of my age
Under its winter sun,
And wave the gayest hand I know
To everything that's young.

Dorothy Keeley

[193]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FOUR POEMS

I ASK FOR A FRIEND

I ask a girl, for a friend—a playmate
Full of May-blown dreams; and lilac in her hair;
With boyish ankles, intimately strange
And hands forever busy with applause;
And mothering, lash-screened, virgin eyes;
And a slim-breasted body made of joy.

Her coming would mean spring to my heart;
We'd give our souls a holiday, cut loose,
Arrange a rendezvous with Love somewhere—
And forget to keep it, being good friends.

I ask a girl, for a friend—a playmate
Full of May-blown dreams; and lilac in her hair.

SONNET

When Love unveiled her body to my sight
And in my heart a strange unquiet grew,
As soft winds stir the bosom of the night
And, after, spill their tears as drops of dew—
When first Love laid aside her woven dress
Of silken-tissued dreams and scented stuff,
And fastened my young eyes with loveliness
Until I thought one world was scarce enough
To hold such utter happiness and pain—

[194]

Ernest Walsh

I begged the god of love to strike me blind,
And seal Love's image up within my brain,
Queen of my thoughts the kingdom of my Mind!
But when I took Love's body to my breast,
Her lips were bitter, and her face a jest.

THE FICKLE LOVER

I have made Life my mistress; built temples
Of song to her in my heart; paraded
Before her enemy, Death. And smiling,
Have kissed Life before Death's envious eyes;
Proud in my lust, gay in my strength, love-wise.

But often in my dreams I've wished to touch
The cool sophisticated lips of Death.

COLLAPSE

As an old tree bent by ages of winds,
So I am tired;

As an oak-leaf blown out upon the sea,
I am lonely;

As a storm-conceived adventurous wave
Divides before its thousand lonely deaths
On alien shores,
My life shall end.

Ernest Walsh

[195]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TABLEAUX

SCHERZO

My soul is a dancer—
A dancer under shimmering willows in the sunlight.
The wind draws a bow across his violin.
He plays a scherzo—
Rippling notes on strings of silver.
Play faster, wind!
My feet are more swift than the leaves of the willow—
Shimmering, shimmering—
Amber shadows in the sunlight.
My feet are more swift than the laughter of waters:
Play faster, wind!

TRYST

I will wear my gown of dusk-blue silk,
And in my hair
A crescent moon, curved like a petal.
From the rim of the shadowy pool
I will pluck an iris—
Dusk-blue, shading to purple,
Faint-scented as the breath of sandalwood.
Softly
I will come through the drooping willows.

[196]

Ellen Margaret Janson

The leaves will catch at my gown,
Dusk-blue
In the purple shadows.
The grasses will whisper, sighing,
As if they knew.

Down at the wall
I will wait alone in the darkness;
And close my eyes,
Dreaming that I hear your voice.

INCENSE SMOKE

One stick I lit in the bronzen image.
The smoke curls upward—lazily—between his lips;
Ivory, and the frail blue of shadows.

The image is speaking—
Words of lazy dream-blue smoke
Carved like ivory:
“Do you remember?—
The priests wore dragons, great jeweled dragons on their
 robes.
They sang dreamily
To the god of the dim temple—
Chanting, chanting
Through the twisted smoke of incense.
But the god did not stir.
His eyes were like opals, veiled with lost mystery!”

[197]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The smoke curls upward—drowsily—
Between his lips;
Mist-gray, and the amber of shadows.

The image is speaking.
Words of dim gray-gold smoke
Graven like amber:
“Do you remember
The offering you burned alone at dawn
To one who did not answer?
Across the ashes
You saw the sea-mist rising—rising—
Like the smoke of incense,
And cried out with the pain in your heart.”

The smoke curls upward—dreamily—
Between his lips;
Ivory, and the lost blue of shadows.

NIGHT IN THE CITY

I hear them pass by the wall of my garden—
The swift whisper of silk,
And laughter—
Tinkling like the wind-bells on the shadowy terrace,
Tinkling and calling.

Their lanterns form a necklace
Of gems,

[198]

Ellen Margaret Janson

Low-strung across the dusk.
Their laughter dies away past the wall of my garden.

In the willow
The echo lingers—
The echo of laughter, failing
Into sudden weariness.

THE UNKNOWN

I am the stir of garments that you heard
 Pass by you in the wood.
I am the lips that smile, but speak no word
 For evil or for good.

I am the voice that whispered in the long
 Sweet twilights of the spring.
I am the haunting music of the song
 I would not let you sing.

I am the finger beckoning in the street;
 The strife, and the reward;
The quivering joy that stabbed you with its sweet
 Sharper than any sword.

I am the dream that shines—a light apart,
 When other lights are spent.
I am the pain that grips and breaks your heart
 To save it from content!

Ellen Margaret Janson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

POEMS

WILD ORCHARD

It is a broken country,
the rugged land is
green from end to end;
the autumn has not come.

Embanked above the orchard
the hillside is a wall
of motionless green trees,
the grass is green and red.

Five days the bare sky
has stood there day and night.
No bird, no sound.
Between the trees

stillness
and the early morning light.
The apple trees
are laden down with fruit.

Among blue leaves
the apples green and red
upon one tree stand out
most enshrined.

Still, ripe, heavy,
spherical and close,

[200]

William Carlos Williams

they mark the hillside.
It is a formal grandeur,

a stateliness,
a signal of finality
and perfect ease.
Among the savage

aristocracy of rocks
one, risen as a tree,
has turned
from his repose.

THE LONELY STREET

School is over. It is too hot
to walk at ease. At ease
in light frocks they walk the streets
to while the time away.
They have grown tall. They hold
pink flames in their right hands.
In white from head to foot,
with sidelong, idle look—
in yellow, floating stuff,
black sash and stockings—
touching their avid mouths
with pink sugar on a stick—
like a carnation each holds in her hand—
they mount the lonely street.

[201]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SPOUTS

In this world of
as fine a pair of breasts
as ever I saw,
the fountain in
Madison Square
spouts up of water
a white tree,
that dies and lives
as the rocking water
in the basin
turns from the stone rim
back upon the jet
and rising there
reflectively drops down again.

THE WIDOW'S LAMENT IN SPRINGTIME

Sorrow is my own yard
where the new grass
flames as it has flamed
often before, but not
with the cold fire
that closes round me this year.
Thirty-five years
I lived with my husband.

[202]

William Carlos Williams

The plum tree is white today
with masses of flowers.
Masses of flowers
load the cherry branches
and color some bushes
yellow and some red,
but the grief in my heart
is stronger than they,
for though they were my joy
formerly, today I notice them
and turn away forgetting.
Today my son told me
that in the meadows,
at the edge of the heavy woods
in the distance, he saw
trees of white flowers.
I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh near them.

William Carlos Williams

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

THE HOPE OF PEACE

ALL the movements of the day—all the isms and schools and drives—fade into insignificance compared with the movement to get rid of war. This movement is not out of place in these pages—in fact, it is immediately the poet's business.

I am tempted to repeat now an editorial from POETRY for September, 1914. In the first white heat of those terrible first battles, I wrote this page on *The Poetry of War*:

Poets have made more wars than kings, and war will not cease until they remove its glamour from the imaginations of men.

What is the fundamental, the essential and psychological cause of war? The feeling in men's hearts that it is beautiful. And who have created this feeling? Partly, it is true, kings and their "armies with banners"; but, far more, poets with their war-songs and epics, sculptors with their statues—the assembled arts which have taken their orders from kings, their inspiration from battles. Kings and artists have united to give to war its glamour, to transmute into sounds and colors and forms of beauty its savagery and horror, to give heroic appeal to its unreason, a heroic excuse to its rage and lust.

All this is of the past. The race is beginning to suspect those old ideals, to give valor a wider range than war affords, to seek danger not at the cannon's mouth but in less noisy labors and adventures. When Nicholas of Russia and William of Germany, in solemn state the other day, invoked the blessing of God upon their armies, the emotion that went round the world was not the old thrill, but a new sardonic laughter.

As Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away, so some poet of the new era may strip the glamour from war. Tolstoi's *War and Peace* and many lesser books are chapters of the new revelation, and modern science,

The Hope of Peace

modern invention, have aided the race in its half-conscious effort to unveil the bitter hideousness of the war-god's visage. But the final word has not been said; the feeling that war is beautiful still lingers in men's hearts, a feeling founded on world-old savageries—love of power, of torture, of murder, love of big stakes in a big game. This feeling must be destroyed, as it was created, through the imagination. It is work for a poet.

There will be a new poetry of war.

The time for that poetry is now. It must be written in peace, for when war begins there is nothing to do but fight. War is no more inevitable between nations than between individuals: as duelling was outlawed long ago in all civilized states, and its elaborate and long-accepted code of honor relegated to the scrap-heap, so shall war be outlawed by the assembled nations of the world, and its elaborate and long-accepted code of international law become a dusty byword of history. War is an absurd anachronism in this closely connected talking and trading world; and modern science has made it an anachronism poisonous and murderous beyond the maddest dreams of the darkest devils of hell. It must end if the white race is to preserve its numbers, its supremacy, its creative energy and power, and the proud fabrics of its civilization.

We face a war to the death on war, and none can afford to be a slacker in it. In this ultimate war the deadliest weapon is the germ of thought in human brains. Only the poet can spawn that germ, and send it flying forth by invisible millions to mature in the minds of men. Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*, and suddenly a rotten

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

thing, long ready for death, was dead. Let some poet—or perhaps a number of poets in a number of arts—stab with laughter or scorch with tears the rotten hulk of war, and suddenly the world will know that war is dead.

H. M.

. MUST ART BE INTERESTING?

Implicitly all interesting things have beauty, and the most interested person is no doubt the most esthetic. Such a thesis is not hard to support on the ground that interest can relate only to things of immediate worth and beauty. But to travel from this rather nervous doctrine of values to the position that beauty is determined by the interest it arouses is another and more complex matter. Though Ford Madox Hueffer in his recent *Thus to Revisit* reiterates charmingly, and with convincing disregard for the logical responsibilities of his theme, that art must be interesting, the shadow of an unsolved problem rather obscures the result. He rests his proposition, it is true, on human impulse, not on philosophical consideration; but the question is not easily confined. In that speculative periphery of art where beauty dissolves into metaphysics no problem is more persistent.

As a weapon against the absolutism in art which makes no compromise with the public taste the book will be effective. It undermines this stern and puritan dogma with the suggestion that final values in art as well as in other fields of human experience lie after all in human

Must Art be Interesting?

nature itself. It abandons the rigorous heaven reserved by the absolutists for the saved few, and returns frankly to popular interest for its standard. To their ascetic practice in casting off mundane and popular interests it can oppose the Protagorean formula, "Man is the measure of all things." But in liberating art from these moralisms Mr. Hueffer imposes another moralism in his repeated dictum, "Art must be interesting." Why after all must these highly complex things, art and interest, always be associated? That interesting things, as a matter of descriptive fact, are in a measure beautiful does not imply that art, as a matter of moral or artistic imperative, must be interesting. Mr. Hueffer rather increases than diminishes the speculative difficulties and enticements of the problem.

Overburdened beauty carries many theories on its back. All of them, from absolutist to pragmatist, aim in some way to find a functional value of beauty in the social system. The mere act of erecting a rational theory about it indicates an effort to organize beauty into a system of human relationships. There remains to remark, no doubt, that beauty is not a theory, that it is not subject to theorizing, that it needs and possesses no justification in the social order. But that too in its way is incorrect. In this field rich with questions Mr. Hueffer's interesting book quite appropriately asks what it cannot answer.

Baker Brownell

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

REVIEWS

A SYMPOSIUM ON MARIANNE MOORE

Poems, by Marianne Moore. Egoist Press, London.

Such contrary opinions of this provocative little pamphlet have reached us that perhaps the most suggestive review will be a more or less questioning rehearsal of them. Miss Moore's steely and recondite art has long been a rallying-point for the radicals. Although her first appearance was in *POETRY*—in May, 1915, most of the entries in these twenty-four closely printed pages date from *Others* and *The Egoist*, a few from *The Dial* and *Contact*. Rumor has hinted that the selection and publication were made by certain friends of the author without her knowledge.

If one were to accept the challenge of the title, and of the geometrical verse-designs which frame these cryptic observations, one might be led straight to the ancient and rather futile inquiry, What is poetry? Poetry is evidently a matter of individual definition. H. D., surely a critic of authority, calls Miss Moore a poet, and a number of young radicals are eager to pronounce her "a very great poet," as Yvor Winters did in a recent letter. "With the exception of Wallace Stevens," he wrote, "she is about the only person since Rimbaud who has had any very profound or intricate knowledge and command of sound; and I am not sure but I think her about the best poet in this country except for Mr. Stevens."

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

A more moderate admirer, Miss Winifred Bryher, sends us the following estimate from England:

This volume is the study of a Marco Polo detained at home. It is the fretting of a wish against wish until the self is drawn, not into a world of air and adventure, but into a narrower self, patient, dutiful and precise. *Those Various Scalpels* is sharper than a diamond. It is as brilliant a poem as any written of late years, and yet it is but a play with the outside of substances and the inside of thoughts too tired to feel emotion. And *Dock Rats* again, or *England*, are wrought as finely as the old Egyptians wrought figures from an inch-high piece of emerald; but they lack the one experience of life for which life was created.

The temperament behind the words is not a passive one, however much environment may have forced meditation upon it as a form of "protective coloration." The spirit is robust, that of a man with facts and countries to discover and not that of a woman sewing at tapestries. But something has come between the free spirit and its desire—a psychological uneasiness that is expressed in these few perfect but static studies of a highly evolved intellect.

Technically it is a triumphant book. There are scenes which are a joy to remember; the shifting color of

wade
through black jade
of the crow-blue mussel shells—

And the vivid beauty of *The Talisman*:

Under a splintered mast,
torn from ship and cast
near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found
embedded in the ground,
a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
with wings spread—

[209]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
men long dead.

Miss Moore has preferred, to date, to express simply the pictorial aspect of the universe, and she has fulfilled perfectly each self-imposed task. Her *Poems* are an important addition to American literature, to the entire literature of the modern world. Only, Marco Polo, your sword is ready and your kingdoms wait. May it soon please you to leave the fireside and ride forth.

But Miss Moore's admirers don't have it all their own way. Here is the point of view of one of POETRY's associate editors, Marion Strobel:

Even a gymnast should have grace. If we find ourselves one of an audience in a side-show we prefer to see the well-muscled lady in tights stand on her head smilingly, with a certain nonchalance, rather than grit her teeth, perspire, and make us conscious of her neck muscles. Still, we would rather not see her at all.

Just so we would rather not follow the contortions of Miss Moore's well-developed mind—she makes us so conscious of her knowledge! And because we are conscious that she has brains, that she is exceedingly well-informed, we are the more irritated that she has not learned to write with simplicity.

The subject-matter of her poems is inevitably dry; the manner of expression pedantic. She shouts at our stupidity: "Literature is a phase of life;" "Words are constructive when they are true—the opaque allusion, the simulated flight upward, accomplishes nothing." And we yawn back at Miss Moore's omniscience.

And another poet-critic, Pearl Andelson, says:

Marianne Moore has much the Emily Dickinson type of mind, but where Emily Dickinson's not infrequent obscurities arise out of an authentic mysticism, Marianne Moore's are more likely the result of a relentless discipline in the subtler "ologies" and "osophies." She is brilliant at times to the point of gaudiness, although one feels that in

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

her brilliance she is most herself. As to form, the fact that she wavers between prose and poetry is not disguised by the breath-taking line-formation. Indeed, I should say the incongruous effect was heightened, rather than diminished, by occasional rhyming. The same, for the most part, may be said of content as of form. Such poems as *Picking and Choosing* and *Poetry* are hybrids of a flagrantly prose origin.

Well, let us turn to the book—without prejudice one way or the other. In the first place, the lady is delightfully independent; she says in *Black Earth*:

Openly, yes,
with the naturalness
 of the hippopotamus or the alligator
 when it climbs out on the bank to experience the
sun, I do these
things which I do, which please
 no one but myself. Now I breathe and now I am sub-
 merged; the blemishes stand up and shout when the object
in view was a
renaissance; shall I say
 the contrary? The sediment of the river which
 encrusts my joints makes me very gray, but I am used
to it, it may
remain there; do away
 with it and I am myself done away with, for the
 patina of circumstance can but enrich what was
there to begin
with. This elephant skin
 which I inhabit, fibred over like the shell of
 the cocoanut, this piece of black glass through which no light
can filter—cut
into checkers by rut
 upon rut of unpreventable experience—
 it is a manual for the peanut-tongued and the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

hairy-toed. Black
but beautiful, my back

is full of the history of power, Of power? What
is powerful and what is not? My soul shall never

be cut into
by a wooden spear.

And so on for about forty more lines, which develop and elaborate the elephantine symbol, and then drop it, as it were, in mid-career, with a quizzical trunk-flourish. As *Black Earth* is admirably representative of its author's thought and style, it may serve as the text for a few inquiries.

Meditative self-confession is no novelty in English poetry—we have countless examples in as many different patterns. Hamlet's soliloquies, Gray's *Elegy*, Pope's *Essay on Man*, Byron's *Child of Harold*, Whitman's *Song of Myself*, many sonnets by Milton, Wordsworth, Keats and other supreme sonneteers—these are but a few of the numerous high precedents in English poetry for more or less imaginative and more or less metrical meditation. And one may not deny imaginative power to the mind which can create and round out and energize so effectively the grotesque image which appears when she holds up the mirror to her soul. Neither may one refuse any poet the right to attempt new metrical patterns; since only through such attempts does any achievement become possible—any enrichment of the English prosodic scheme.

So it remains to attempt to estimate the validity of Miss Moore's processes and the degree of her achievement.

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

Unquestionably there is a poet within the hard, deliberately patterned crust of such soliloquies as *Black Earth*, *Those Various Scalpels*, *Pedantic Literalist*, *Reinforcements*—almost any of these titles—though a poet too sternly controlled by a stiffly geometrical intellectuality. Miss Moore is in terror of her Pegasus; she knows of what sentimental excesses that unruly steed is capable, and so her ironic mind harnesses down his wings and her iron hand holds a stiff rein. This mood yields prose oftener than poetry, but it wrings out now and then the reluctant beauty of a grotesque, or even, more rarely, such a lyric as *Talisman*.

No amount of line-patterning can make anything but statement and argument out of many of the entries in this book—for example, *Picking and Choosing*, which begins:

Literature is a phase of life: if

one is afraid of it, the situation is irremediable; if
one approaches it familiarly,

what one says of it is worthless. Words are constructive
when they are true; the opaque illusion—the simulated flight

upward—accomplishes nothing. Why cloud the fact

that Shaw is self-conscious in the field of sentiment but is otherwise rewarding? that James is all that has been

said of him but is not profound? It is not Hardy
the distinguished novelist and Hardy the poet, but one man

“interpreting life through the medium of the
emotions.”

If the mood instinctively flouts the muse, what of the method? If the mood may rarely yield more than the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

hard reluctant beauty of a grotesque, is the method inevitable and right, fitting words musically, magically to the motive, as in all the masterpieces of the art? Well, let me confess that I do not find the divine shapeliness and sound-richness which Mr. Winters referred to in his letter. What I do find in certain poems is a brilliant array of subtly discordant harmonies not unlike those of certain ultra-modern composers, set forth in stanza-forms purely empirical even when emphasized by rhyme, forms which impose themselves arbitrarily upon word-structure and sentence-structure instead of accepting happily the limitations of the art's materials, as all art must. When Miss Moore uses the first syllable of *accident* as a whole line to rhyme with *lack*, or the article *a* as a line to rhyme with the end of *Persia*; when she ends a stanza in a split infinitive, or in the middle of the swift word *very*—indeed, anywhere in the middle of words or sentences, she is forcing her pattern upon materials which naturally reject it, she is giving a wry twist even though her aim is a grotesque; and when her aim is more serious, such verbal whimsicalities strike at once the intensely false note of affectation. And as she takes her own way in these details of style, so she gives little heed to the more general laws of shapeliness; each poem begins as it ends and ends as it begins—a coruscating succession of ideas, with little curve of growth or climax.

What I do find throughout this book is wit — wit fundamental and instinctive which expresses itself not

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

only in words, phrases, rhymes, rhythms, but in ideas, emotions. The grim and haughty humor of this lady strikes deep, so deep as to absorb her dreams and possess her soul. She feels immense incongruities, and the incongruity of her little ego among them moves her art not to grandeur but to scorn. As a satirist she is at times almost sublime—what contrary devil balks her even at those moments, tempting her art to its most inscrutable perversities?

Youth is sometimes penetrating in self-diagnosis. I am tempted to recall the first poem Miss Moore ever published—*That Harp You Play So Well*, from the 1915 group in *POETRY*:

O David, if I had
Your power, I should be glad—
In harping, with the sling,
In patient reasoning!

Blake, Homer, Job, and you,
Have made old wine-skins new.
Your energies have wrought
Stout continents of thought.

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
Of exorcising wrong,
Of harping to a song?

The sceptre and the ring
And every royal thing
Will fail. Grief's lustiness
Must cure the harp's distress.

"If the heart be brass . . . every royal thing will fail."

[215]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

It is not this reviewer who says that, or invokes for this poet "grief's lustiness." May even grief soften a heart of brass? And is a deep resistless humor like Miss Moore's the most subtly corrosive destroyer of greatness?

H. M.

A MYSTIC WARRIOR

The Mystic Warrior, by James Oppenheim. A. A. Knopf.

We might count as art every cross-country flyer cutting its shriek into a black sky or a blue sky; every sky-scraper flinging windows, light, smoke into an incredulous sky; every unimpeachable bath-room trinity; the giant torsos of boilers and bellies of gas-tanks; the bird-like or fish-like aeroplane; the architecture of the farm—silo, granary and barn; or, for the matter of that, the fields of grain themselves, the vain prodigal orchards. It is in the air to do this. Out of such industrial shapes men are making violent tragic-comic drama, ruled as in art by the mathematics of the elements. So the analogy is close and tempting, and we can point that way to America as rich in self-expression. Or we may follow another trend of fashion—an import out of French dadaism or a mood synchronous with it—and abandon the word art altogether as an obsolete and paupered notion. A composer of genius was recently heard to bandy the idea of an anti-art society, where he said, lightly but seriously, any artist of consequence belonged. Ben Hecht in his first work of size follows his apparently biographic hero to say it is not

A Mystic Warrior

"art" he wants, "art is something he can spit out in conversation." In a foreword to an exhibition of his photographs Alfred Stieglitz formally junks the word along with a number of abstractions. Yet it was a word concrete enough to artists, not so long dead either—Cézanne, Degas, Rodin, Whistler—to whom the living still pay homage.

People may be wiped from the face of the earth, but art is.

And there are still those who echo this as a hard truth, in whose eyes even the machine has been unable to break the essential sequence of things. They have need of this word to name the one human reality running so close to all reality as to far outstrip that vanity, self-expression; as to make shapes more intentional, more delicate, more potent than any American industry has yet made. In the pages of *The Mystic Warrior*, an analysis of himself, James Oppenheim writes himself down as one of these. His sense of the relentless absolutes of art, his denial of himself as an absolute, instil this poem with a deep candor, a kind of darkened tranquillity—virtues rare enough today to mean in themselves distinction:

The artist, finally the artist?

America shuns him, cutting herself off from her own greatness:
But he comes nevertheless . . . he is Walt riding on top a bus, and Poe
dreaming of stars in a cottage with his wife dying,
And Emerson, absent-minded, minded of the Oversoul, in Concord
woods,
And Hawthorne moody in sad Puritanism,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And Mark Twain smoking cigars in bed, sweating and groaning over
Huckleberry Finn,
And giant-like tearful Dreiser, and Sandburg sitting in a newspaper
office,
And Vachel Lindsay jazzing in Paradise (or is it Springfield, Illinois?)
And Masters among all souls in strange Spoon River.

So I speak for the artist . . .

But also I speak for the multitude like myself, with equal struggles and
the same yearnings,

The same sorrows, joys and lamenting,

But no gift: inarticulate, frustrated, America's victims.

There is the argument, in the unfolding of which perhaps Oppenheim does not quite go the length of candor. For his indecisions and his failures he can't resist blaming America more than the mere fact that the inevitable image, word, phrase come seldom to him. You enjoy the drift of the book, but you have to ignore more than one lapse of taste—that unerring instinct for the word and the place. Perhaps too breathless an awe has sometimes defeated him. There is a hint of this in the picture of a meeting with “our most powerful novelist”—Theodore Dreiser, one is led to suppose:

So we walk, we talk.

And here is the Hudson, the North River, with shouting gold of sunset
and smokes of the tugboats,

Shadows of cliffs, like the spacious threshold of a spiritual universe;

And I grow tense with the wonder of it and feel the artist's despair of
setting it down in words . . .

So I turn to him: “Just look,” I say, “could you describe that?”

He speaks carelessly:

“Oh, yes—that or anything.”

A Mystic Warrior

Yet this reverence for great vision, great craft, has had its reward, the reward of concentration—workmanship. If this writer were a house-painter, you might not always like the colors he mixed, but his surfaces, his finish would be scrupulous. So *The Mystic Warrior* contains pictures,—indelible pictures, snatches of rhythm, voices: pictures of childhood in New York schools and brownstone houses; pictures of a death and a funeral:

I am a tailor: I am cutting and sewing a pair of pants for my little brother:

My little grandmother comes in, walks softly, inaudibly by me . . .
She carefully pulls down the shades, making the room yellow . . .
I confront her: "Why do you pull down the shades, grandma?"

She says there is too much sunlight . . .
Then she looks at me, hesitates, takes me by the arm,
Whispers in my ears, "James, your father is dead."

I smell flowers—lilies, roses, violets—I shall never forget that smell . . .
I am taken down in the long parlor . . .

There are people there: uncles and aunts, grandpa, grandma . . .
There are camp-stools, and a black-cloth coffin smothered in flowers . . .

And now my infancy is ended . . .
For this is death; I have come face to face with my enemy, death . . .
Servant-girls soothed me, saying, "He is an angel now." . . .

Vivid portraits of people; pictures of offices, wharves, homes; pictures of a Jewish bourgeoisie in New York, redolent of the race, recalling the riches Rembrandt made of the same theme in Amsterdam centuries ago; and the breath of countless streets:

Old days on the West Side,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Old nights.

Summer nights when there was a faint Coney Island stir down electric-
lit Eighth Avenue . . .

A moth-stir, flame, shadow, Bagdad.

There is unction in *The Mystic Warrior*, but almost no sham, no bunk. At its best the tenor of it is curiously dark and steady—a suggestion of slow night rain, or a ship at anchor in night waters. The poem succeeds in being a distillation, in contrast to the brew made, it seems, after the recipe: "To hell with work, novelty will provide the kick." Oppenheim, you feel, has earned the right to say:

In the grey air we walk, in the glisten of the dying year;
And my soul goes down to roots, and the roots, like a tree's, are deep in
the earth.

Acknowledging this, you are even willing to ignore the abstract use of the word "soul." *Dorothy Dudley*

MRS. WYLIE'S POEMS

Nets to Catch the Wind, by Elinor Wylie. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

A lyric voice slight, but clear and fine, may be heard in this book, the voice of a free and lightly ranging spirit. The sound of it is now gay, now grave, but always it holds a little aloof—one detects that something "austere, immaculate" for which the poet herself holds her Puritan ancestry responsible. In a number of poems her mood is thoughtfully admonitory, as *The Eagle and the Mole*, *Madman's Song*, or *Say Not of Beauty she is Good*:

[220]

Mrs. Wylie's Poems

Oh, she is neither good nor bad,
But innocent and wild.
Enshrine her and she dies, who had
The hard heart of a child.

Again, it is meditative or descriptive, or, as in *Valentine*, self-searching. But always the emotion is shy and delicate, as of a cool small wild-flower growing, by some whim of Nature, not in the woods, but in the protected area of a garden. The flower is very simple and of quiet color, but it has an individual vitality nevertheless.

The Eagle and the Mole, urging toward the high or the profound as against a safe "middle-of-the-road" policy, is perhaps the most temptingly quotable poem in the book. But as it has already gone the rounds, and as POETRY has printed *Velvet Shoes* and certain others, we prefer to offer *The Prinkin' Leddie* as an example of pure and irresistible gayety—a mood extremely rare in modern art:

"The Hielan' lassies are a' for spinnin'
The Lowlan' lassies for prinkin' and pinnin';
My daddie w'u'd chide me, an' so w'u'd my minnie
If I s'u'd bring hame sic a prinkin' leddie."

Now haud your tongue, ye haverin' coward,
For whilst I'm young, I'll go flounced an' flowered,
In lutestring striped like the strings o' a fiddle,
Wi' gowden girdles aboot my middle.

My silks are stiff wi' patterns o' siller,
I've an ermine hood like the hat o' a miller,
I've chains o' coral like rowan berries,
An' a cramoisie mantle that cam' frae Paris.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

When the skies are low an' the earth is frozen,
Ye'll be gay an' gled for the leddie ye've chosen,
When ower the snow I go prinkin' and prancin'
In my wee red slippers were made for dancin'.

It's better a leddie like Solomon's lily
Than one that'll run like a Hielan' gillie
A-linkin' it ower the leas, my laddie,
In a raggedy kilt an' a belted plaidie!

An unusually interesting first book.

H. M.

THOUGHTFUL MEASURES

Out of Mist, by Florence Kilpatrick Mixter. Boni & Liveright.

Carefully studied, delicately wrought, are these poems—this sequence of twenty-nine sonnets followed by as many other poems. If they are in a sense too studied and deliberate, they yet express genuine emotion in grave and thoughtful measures of modern straightness and simplicity—there is no pretense in the feeling, and rarely a trace of rhetoric or palaver in the style. The best of them rise to a quiet beauty and distinction—*Lullaby*, which was in *POETRY* last summer, is a fine lyric; and this one, *To a Young Girl*, is almost as quotable, though the word *holocaust* is a bit melodramatic:

I had forgotten there were hearts so young
As yours, tonight,
Whose voice, now echoing with songs unsung,
Fills me with strange delight.

I had forgotten there were eyes so swift
Of April mirth,

Thoughtful Measures

Flashing as though with some invisible gift
From Heaven to Earth.

I had forgotten there were lips that pray,
Like a gray-winged dove,
For one more hour of laughter and of play
Before the holocaust of love.

The sonnet sequence hints at the story of a youthful love affair finished by autocratic death. We follow it a little apart, watching "out of mist," through translucent veils, an experience not unusual, not strongly individualized, but for that very reason of wide appeal. Many a first love-story appears here in thoughtful reminiscence, its joy and sadness real, but softened by time and change. In sonnet XXVII we have the climax of it:

In memory I sit beside your bed
And see again the smile that lit your face;
Nor do the slow forgetful years erase
A syllable of those last words we said.
For, through my tears, seeing your brightness fled
Because of them, I pled with Heaven for grace
To make you smile once more, while with quick pace
I heard night passing that would leave you dead.
Swiftly I took your hand and held it tight,
Then told in words that choked me ever after
Some foolish trifling thing. And though the light
That came with your brave laugh was gone thereafter,
Yet, as a rocket fills the quiet night
With falling stars, I hear again your laughter.

Cradle Song, Dressing Up, Elegy, and The Candle use the familiar four-line measure to present emotions of flower-like grace.

H. M.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

NEW INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINES

Three magazines which aim at international authority and circulation send us their first numbers from Rome, London and New York. All three appear in a luxury of format and typography more easily attained abroad than here; attainable here, indeed, only at a cost so high as to be almost prohibitive. We have, first, *The Broom*, described as "an international magazine of the arts published by Americans in Italy" (at 18 Trinità dei Monti), and edited by Harold A. Loeb and Alfred Kreymborg, with Giuseppe Prezzolini as associate editor; second, *Fanfare*, "a musical causerie issued on the first and fifteenth of the month," edited by Leigh Henry and published by Goodwin & Tabb, Ltd., at 34 Percy Street, London; and, third, we have the resuscitated *Little Review*, issued as a seven-dollar-a-year "quarterly of arts and letters," in an initial autumn number, from 27 West Eighth Street, New York, the "administration" consisting of Margaret Anderson, "jh," Ezra Pound and Francis Picabia.

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In *The Broom* Alfred Kreymborg shows once more his ability as an editor, but the new paper does not "start something," nor arouse the excitement of anticipation, to the degree that the first number of *Others* did in July, 1915. There is much variety in the contents, which range from

New International Magazines

a strictly correct sonnet by Walter de la Mare to phantasmagoric designs in black and white and gray from paintings in the most approved cubistic manner by Albert Gleizes and Juan Gris.

We see many familiar names among the fifteen or so literary contributors: Lew Sarett has a *Maple-sugar Song* of the Chippewas; Amy Lowell offers a three-page chant in praise of *Lilacs*—

Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.

Lola Ridge sings of *Hospital Nights*; Wallace Gould offers a prose-poem narrative about *Marnia*. The only other verse-entries are some Chinese poems of J. Wing, translated by E. Powys Mathers, and a twelve-line rhymed poem, *Lake*, by Bayard Boyeson, which opens the number. Other poets appear in prose: James Stephens with a tragic Dublin story, *Hunger*, as ruthless and terrible in its deliberate detail as the title implies; James Oppenheim with a quite wonderful study of a sanely insane mind; Haniel Long with a whimsical sketch. Conrad Aiken, Louis Untermeyer and Emmy Sanders offer certain critical inquiries concerning poets and their art, and the invasion of Europe by America. In short, almost everyone appears except the over-modest Mr. Kreymborg.

The magazine has a beautifully printed page about five by seven inches, set sumptuously in hand-made large-paper measuring nearly nine by thirteen.

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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Fanfare, which is primarily musical, blows a gay trumpet as it enters:

Fanfare—does not the word suggest something stirring, brilliant, joyous, exciting—something which preludes adventure? . . . We are the heralds of the new era, sounding the fanfare for its union with new beauty. Such union calls for revelry; hence our *Fanfare* will be merry. . . . We set forth boldly, our trumpets bright to reflect sunlight, our *Fanfare* ringing truly alike for ritual, ceremony, battle, joust, forlorn hope, festival, triumph or masquerade.

This paper, although a musical periodical, believes, like POETRY, in a closer alliance of the arts. Its editor thinks that musicians are too narrowly trained—therefore

Fanfare will deal with literature, drama, painting, sculpture, and theatre-craft, as matters a knowledge of which forms a necessary complement to musical culture.

So we have two or three clever drawings and a poem by John Gould Fletcher among the musical entries within the gaily decorative cover of *Fanfare's* first number.

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The Little Review is larger than of yore—an hundred and twelve pages measuring more than seven inches by nine. It aims at the very latest thing, and achieves, as its *pièce de résistance*, a fifty-page poem by Jean Cocteau, translated by Jean Hugo, *The Cape of Good Hope*. Having read half of it, and being still in a state of innocence, I commend the rest to those who can watch “the dangerous hallucinations continue.”

On the way to Cocteau, we have Ezra Pound on Brancusi, illustrated; some *Fumigations* by Picabia, a phi-

New International Magazines

losophy of *Psycho-democracy* set forth by Mina Loy, poems in French by Paul Morand and in German by Ivan Goll. Also there are some rather outspoken tales, and Ezra Pound tells us all of our sins in a *Historical Survey*.

It is said that Mr. Pound readopted *The Little Review* because of its editor's brave fight against the suppression of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Well, it *was* a brave fight—any fight against the censor's gag-laden fist takes bravery. The trouble is, *The Little Review* never knows when to stop. Just now it seems to be headed straight toward Dada; but we could forgive even that if it would drop Else von Freytag-Loringhoven on the way.

VARIOUS PRIZES

The Dial's first award of its annual prize of two thousand dollars, for one of its contributors, was announced December first. It goes to Sherwood Anderson, of Chicago, the distinguished author of a number of novels and short stories, and of *Mid-American Chants*, poems in free verse, of which a group first appeared in *POETRY* for September, 1917.

This is the most generous literary prize as yet awarded in this country; an admirable example which should have a train of followers. Although Mr. Anderson's contributions to *The Dial* have been in prose, his being a poet as well gives *POETRY* the opportunity to congratulate him,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

and also the staff of the magazine which honors him.

The Poetry Society of America announces the award of two prizes, each of five hundred dollars:

First, the prize offered for the best book of verse by an American poet, published in the United States during the year 1920, is divided equally between *Heavens and Earth*, by Stephen Vincent Benét, and *Smoke and Steel*, by Carl Sandburg. The judges were Richard Le Gallienne, William Lyon Phelps and Harriet Monroe.

Second, the prize offered in the William Lindsey Contest for poetic drama has been awarded to Harry Lee for his four-act play, *Il Poverello*. One hundred and forty-five plays were submitted, and the judges were Stuart Walker, George Arliss, George P. Baker, Jane Dransfield and Jessie B. Rittenhouse.

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The Friday Club of Chicago, at a recent meeting of its board of directors, voted fifty dollars to POETRY as a prize for a young poet for the current year.

This gift is acknowledged with special pleasure as it is the first offer of the kind which POETRY has received from any women's club, or indeed from any society. A number of clubs, in Chicago and elsewhere, have given annual prizes to painters, sculptors, and perhaps musicians; we hope that the Friday Club's example will remind them that prizes to poets, being excessively rare, should have the preference from clubs largely devoted, as most of them are, to the study of literature.

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM PARIS

My Dear POETRY: Interest in American letters seems to be increasing in France. As one evidence, note that the program required for the English-teaching certificate contains Frost's *North of Boston*. This is due to M. Charles Cestre, the well-known professor of American literature at the Sorbonne. I consider it a bold step to admit in University studies a quite modern poet whose genius has not yet been fully acknowledged by our critics.

French verse is still a matter of discussion. Yet Paul Valéry seems to attract partisans from sundry corners:

La lune mince verse une lueur sacrée,
Toute une jupe d'un tissu d'argent léger
Sur les bases de marbre ou vient l'ombre songer,
Que suit d'un char de perles une gaze nacrée.

A scintillating symphony of vowels; and a modern rendering of an old romantic theme. Valéry and a few other poets have united to form a "New Pléiade." The original French Pléiade, you remember, was formed at a moment when the French language needed clarification and enriching. What seems to be the aim of the actual Pléiade? The names of the members will speak for themselves: Countess Mathieu de Noailles, Pierre Camo, Derennes, Gasquet, de Magallon, Mazade, Valéry—all artists of classical or semi-classical verse. It is a protest against the extremist and cryptic schools of art. The

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Countess is a great favorite among women, tender youths, priests (if I dare trust a friend's testimony), and bourgeois readers in whose ears still lingers the flowing cadence of our traditional verse. Camo writes finely-chiselled sonnets and odes in which the modern notes blend exquisitely with fading reminiscences. Gasquet was a fiery artist of the South, whose experiments in polyphonic stanzas, together with alexandrines, have just been cut short by death. Our poetical tradition has definitely acquired a pliancy which not even the attempts at classic tragedy of the official Comédie Française are able to endanger. Even Max Jacob, the sweet child of humor, who keeps apart from any coterie with his *bons mots* and new faith—even Max Jacob writes exquisitely modulated alexandrines. You see that our extremists, Dada excepted (but who knows what they mean?—not even Ezra Pound), display a certain coquetry towards our well ordered muse:

Le ciel a pour la mer des regards qui bénissent,
Le soleil sur la mer est un bateau qui glisse,
Chaque lame a son or, chaque écume a sa nuit . . .

What do you think of this gold-and-black up-to-date fabric?—

Every wave has its gold; every foam has its night.

More robust and more thoughtful has become the muse of Vildrac, and of Romains. The *Chants du Désespéré*, by Charles Vildrac, ring with the sorrow of the poet's bruised dreams. Vildrac bends over the corpse of his friend, a

A Letter from Paris

victim of the war; he turns his clear eyes on his suffering fellow-men; he sees more ugliness than before.

Jules Romains (*Le Voyage des Amants*) seems to remain more true to his former philosophy. A smiling fancy, direct sensations of Paris and the world, with sometimes a cosmic vista:

Les jours grandissent,
Chaque jour est un coup plus dur
Porté plus profond dans la nuit;
Et la matière des ténèbres
Tantôt molle, tantôt cassante,
Se pulvérise ou s'aplatit.

The art of the New Pléiade and of the Unanimists make this a great epoch for French poetry. Alas! that it should not also be glorious for the French drama! But here we have to deplore that our official theatres leave to private and too little moneyed initiative the production of new, vigorous and audacious plays. The Comédie Française practically gave nothing worth mentioning apart from the classical répertoire. *La Mort Enchaînée*, by Maurice Magre, has won a prize of a few thousand francs for the best new play, and it is grievously accurate that this heavy and obscure mythological drama was merely one of the passable novelties of the Comédie. As for the Odéon, we feel sure that the new play by Paul Fort is going to make up for the stuff that has been produced there in the course of the few past months. But of course we have our secondary stages: the Vieux Colombier, the Théâtre des Arts; and we have the Group of the Six.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I shall have occasion to write you about this young group of Six Musicians, and about Jean Cocteau as a poet. Let me say now that *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, played at the finest and most comfortable theatre in Paris, the Champs Elysées, before a smart audience and a good number of buoyantly hostile traditionalists, has not proved a failure. It is a farce mimed by dancers for actors, while a phonograph explains, in the words of Cocteau, the progress of the plot. A nervous cerebral music, with here and there patches of sunlight, has been composed by the Six. It is a healthy combination of sound, color, and gesture; with no human voice, which may be deplored, but at least with nothing of the thundering declamation of too many comedians. *Jean Catel*

NOTES

Mr. Robert Frost has recently accepted an invitation from the University of Michigan; and he is now an informal member of its faculty, resident during the college year at Ann Arbor. His latest book was *Mountain Interval*, published by Henry Holt & Co., in 1916.

Dr. William Carlos Williams, of Rutherford, N. J., will put out very soon a new book of poems through the Four Seas Co., which has previously published *Al Que Quiere* and *Kora in Hell*. Dr. Williams and Robert McAlmon are editors of *Contact*, a magazine of which four numbers have appeared during the past year.

Miss Grace Fallow Norton, of New York, who is now sojourning in France, is the author of *The Sister of the Wind* and other books of verse (Houghton Mifflin Co.).

Mr. Glenn Ward Dresbach, who has recently removed from New Mexico to El Paso, Texas, is the author of several books of verse, the latest being *Morning, Noon and Night* (Four Seas Co.). A new one, *In Colors of the West*, will appear next spring.

Marjorie Meeker, who recently married Mr. Shirley Wing, lived formerly in Columbus, O., but is now travelling abroad. She has not yet published a volume.

The other poets in this number are recent accessions to POETRY's list:

Helen Coale Crew (Mrs. Henry Crew), of Evanston, Ill., has published verse and prose in various magazines.

Miss Julia R. Reynolds is a young poet of Sumter, S. C.; Miss Ellen Margaret Janson of Seattle, Wash.; and Miss Dorothy Keeley of Chicago. Miss Esther Louise Ruble was brought up in Kansas, and is now a student at the University of Chicago.

Mr. Ernest Walsh, who was in the aviation service during and after the War and suffered a fall, is now in the Army Hospital at Camp Kearny, Cal., where there is a group of young men who are much interested in poetry.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- The Lifted Cup*, by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Fugitive, by Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan Co.
Red Poppies in the Wheat, by John Richard Moreland. J. T. White & Co.
Free Forms, by Simon Felshin. Privately printed, Paris, France.
John Masterson, by Kenneth Campbell. Campbell Press, San Diego.
Collected Poems, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.
A Penny Whistle Together with The Babette Ballads, by Bert Leston Taylor. Alfred A. Knopf.
Archways of Life, by Mercedes de Acosta. Moffat, Yard & Co.
Quiet Waters, by Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff. Moffat, Yard & Co.
Shrines and Shadows, by John Rollin Stuart. Four Seas Co.
Nets to Catch the Wind, by Elinor Wylie. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Cross-currents, by Margaret Widdemer. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Saturday Market, by Charlotte Mew. Macmillan Co.
Varied Verse, by Carter S. Cole, M. D. Moffat, Yard & Co.
Chenar Leaves—Poems of Kashmir, by Mrs. Percy Brown. Longmans, Green & Co.
The Pier-glass, by Robert Knopf. Alfred A. Knopf.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

- On the Des Moines*, by James Cloyd Bowman. Cornhill Co.
The Beggar's Vision, by Brookes More. Cornhill Co.
Pieces of Eight: A Sequence of Twenty-four War-sonnets, by John Armstrong Chaloner. Privately printed, Roanoke Rapids, N. C.
Willow Pollen, by Jeannette Marks. Four Seas Co.
We, the Musk Chasers, by Loureine Aber. Ralph Fletcher Seymour.
England in the Eighteenth Century, by O. F. Christie. Basil Blackwell.
Melodies and Mountaineers, by Isabella McLennan McMeekin. Stratford Co.
The Return and Other Poems, by Margaret L. Woods. John Lane Co.
The Open Sea, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.
Reynard the Fox, or The Ghost Heath Run, by John Masefield. Illustrated by G. D. Armour and Carton Moorepark. Macmillan Co.
Bethlehem, by Elizabeth Sewell Hill. Methodist Book Concern, Cincinnati.
Dreams Out of Darkness, by Jean Starr Untermeyer. B. W. Huebsch.
Children of God and Winged Things, by Anne Moore. Four Seas Co.
Early and Late, by Katharine Warren. Duffield & Co.

PLAYS:

- Four Plays for Dancers*, by W. B. Yeats. Macmillan Co.
The Tragedy of Nan, by John Masefield. Macmillan Co.
Oliver Cromwell, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.
One Act Plays, by Alice Brown. Macmillan Co.
Uriel Acosta—A Play, and A Fourth Group of Verse, by Charles Reznikoff. Privately printed, New York.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Songs of the Cowboys*, ed. by N. Howard Thorp. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Oxford Poetry, 1921, edited by Alan Porter, Richard Hughes and Robert Graves. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.
Widsith; Beowulf; Finnsburgh; Waldere; Deor: translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff; introd. by Viscount Northcliffe. E. P. Dutton & Co.
Selected Poems and Ballads of Paul Fort, translated from the French by John Strong Newberry. Duffield & Co.

PROSE:

- Louise Imogen Guiney*, by Alice Brown. Macmillan Co.
The Literature of Ecstasy, by Albert Mordell. Boni & Liveright.

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The New York Sunday Tribune of Jan. 9th, 1921, said editorially, in quoting seven poems from our January number:

"The varied interest and beauty presented are typical of POETRY's quality. Thanks to a rare coincidence of poise and generous imagination, of sense and sensitiveness, it ranks as easily the best vehicle of poetry in the English language."

In the London Times of Nov. 25th, 1920, we read:

"We need not linger over the many English and French contributors to this periodical. . . We do have to note that it has published, as it honestly claims, much of the best experimental poetry written by Americans in the past eight years. . . They have succeeded in their primary design—to create a poetry which should be American in thought, feeling, subject, and form. That is, after all, a distinct achievement."

The Chicago Evening Post, in commenting on POETRY'S eighth birthday, said:

"No editorship is infallible, but it is rather interesting and enlightening to look over the old numbers of POETRY and to realize that the first important chance for publication in America was given to many poets, almost unknown, who have since obtained fame. . . We wonder how many more may yet be helped. POETRY is, so far as we know, unique in the length of its life, recognized position and rigorously artistic standard."

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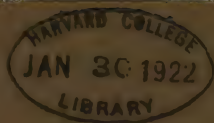
MISS HARRIET MONROE

who has studied the poetry movement in all its phases, will consider engagements for a lecture trip east, west or south in February and March, 1922; or for autumn and winter dates nearer Chicago.

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POETRY

543 Cass Street, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



Vol. XIX

No. V

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
February 1922

Poems by Wang Wei, tr'd by
Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu
Abrigada, by Leonora Speyer
Winter Dawn, by C. L. Skinner
Fate, by Harold Monro
Fire, by Eunice Tietjens

543 Cass Street, Chicago

\$3.00 per Year Single Numbers 25c

Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

Vol. XIX

No. V

POETRY for FEBRUARY, 1922

Poems by Wang Wei

PAGE

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Translated by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu | 235 |
| Answering Vice-prefect Chang—A Message to P'ai Ti— | |
| On the Way to the Temple—Mount Chung-nan—A View | |
| of the Han River—In My Lodge at Wang-Ch'uan—My | |
| Retreat at Chung-nan—Among Bamboos—Lines—A Parting | |
| —A Song at Wei-ch'eng—The Beautiful Hsi-shih—Young | |
| Girls from Lo-yang—Harmonizing a Poem—A Green Stream | |
| In Praise of Abigada | Leonora Speyer 242 |
| An Old Woman—I Complain in Passing | Harlow Clarke 247 |
| Winter Dawn | Constance Lindsay Skinner 248 |
| From a Chicago "L" | Sarah-Margaret Brown 251 |
| Fate I-II | Harold Monro 252 |
| Hillside Poems | F. R. McCreary 255 |
| Winter Rain—A Naked Maple—Noontime—Judges—Alone | |
| on the Hill | |
| Incidentals | Hi Simons 258 |
| Dust in the Road—Taps—The Star—Portrait of an Old Roué | |
| Tak for Sidst | Babette Deutsch 259 |
| In the Office | Gwendolen Haste 260 |
| The Guardians—Aileen | |
| Motherhood | Medora C. Addison 261 |
| The Lover | Paul Tanaquil 261 |
| Fire | Eunice Tietjens 262 |
| The Utterance of Poetry | H. M. 266 |
| Translating Wang Wei | Witter Bynner 272 |
| Reviews: | |
| A Cool Master | Yvor Winters 278 |
| Mr. Yeats' Plays | Cloyd Head 288 |
| Notes and Books Received | 292-293 |

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it



Doetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX
No. V

FEBRUARY 1922

POEMS BY WANG WEI

ANSWERING VICE-PREFECT CHANG

AS the years go by, give me but peace,
Freedom from ten thousand matters.
I ask myself and always answer,
What can be better than coming home?
A wind from the pine-trees blows my sash,
And my lute is bright with the mountain-moon.
You ask me about good and evil? . . .
Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing!

BOUND HOME TO MOUNT SUNG

The limpid river, past its bushes
Flowing slowly as my chariot,

[235]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Seems a fellow-voyager
Returning with the evening-birds.
A ruined city-wall overtops an old ferry,
Autumn sunset floods the peaks. . . .
Far away, beside Mount Sung,
I shall rest and close my door.

A MESSAGE TO P'AI TI

Cold and blue now are the mountains
From autumn-rain that beat all day.
By my thatch-door, leaning on my staff,
I listen to cicadas in the evening wind.
Sunset lingers at the ferry,
Cooking-smoke floats up from the houses. . . .
Oh, when shall I pledge Chieh-yu again,
And sing a wild poem at Five Willows!

ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE

Not knowing the way to the Temple of Heaped Fragrance,
I have roamed, under miles of mountain-cloud,
Old woods without a human track.
But far on the height I hear a bell,
A rillet sings over winding rocks,
The sun is tempered by green pines. . . .
At twilight, close to an emptying pool,
I lie and master the Passion-dragon.

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

MOUNT CHUNG-NAN

The Great One's height near the City of Heaven
Joins a thousand mountains to the corner of the sea.
Clouds, when I look back, close behind me;
Mists, when I enter them, are gone.
A central peak divides the wilds
And weather into many valleys. . . .
Needing a place to spend the night,
I call to a wood-cutter over the river.

A VIEW OF THE HAN RIVER

With its three Hsiang branches it reaches Ch'u border
And with nine streams touches the gateway of Ching:
This river runs beyond heaven and earth,
Where the color of mountains both is and is not.
The dwellings of men seem floating along
On ripples of the distant sky. . . .
O Hsiang-yang, how your beautiful days
Make drunken my old mountain-heart!

IN MY LODGE AT WANG-CH'UAN
AFTER A LONG RAIN

The woods have stored the rain, and slow comes the smoke
As rice is cooked on faggots and carried to the fields;
Over the quiet marshland flies a white egret,
And mango-birds are singing in the full summer trees.

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I have learned to watch in peace the mountain morning-
glories,
To eat split dewy sunflower-seeds under a bough of pine,
To yield the place of honor to any boor at all. . . .
Why should I frighten sea-gulls even with a thought?

MY RETREAT AT CHUNG-NAN

My heart in middle age found the Way,
And I came to dwell at the foot of this mountain.
When the spirit moves, I wander alone
Where beauty is known only to me.
I will walk till the water checks my path,
Then sit and watch the rising clouds,
And some day meet an old woodcutter,
And talk and laugh and never return.

IN A RETREAT AMONG BAMBOOS

Alone I am sitting under close bamboos,
Playing on my lute, singing without words.
Who can hear me in this thicket? . . .
Bright and friendly comes the moon.

LINES

You who arrive from my old country,
Tell me what has happened there!
Did you see, when you passed my silken window,
The first cold blossom of the plum?

[238]

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

A PARTING

Friend, I have watched you down the mountain
Till now in the dark I close my thatch-door. . . .
Grasses return again green in the spring,
But, O Wang Sun, will *you* return?

A SONG AT WEI-CH'ENG

The morning rain settled the dust in Wei-ch'eng;
In the yard of the tavern green willows revive. . . .
Oh, wait to empty one more cup!
West of Yang Gate—no old friends!

THE BEAUTIFUL HSI-SHIH

Since beauty is honored all over the empire,
How could Hsi-shih remain humbly at home?
At dawn washing clothes by a lake in Yueh;
At dusk in the Palace of Wu, a great lady!
Poor, no rarer than the others—
Exalted, everyone praising her rareness.
But above all honors, the honor was hers
Of blinding with passion an emperor's reason.
Girls who had once washed silk beside her
Now were ordered away from her carriage. . . .
Ask them, in her neighbors' houses,
If by wrinkling their brows they can copy her beauty.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A SONG OF YOUNG GIRLS FROM LO-YANG

There are girls from Lo-yang in that door across the street,
Some of them fifteen and some a little older.

While their master rides a rapid horse with jade bit and
bridle,

Their handmaid brings them codfish on a golden plate.
On the painted pavilions, facing their red towers,
Cornices are pink and green with peach-bloom and with
willow;

Canopies of silk awn their seven-scented chairs;
Rare fans shade them home, to their nine-flowered cur-
tains.

Their lord, with rank and wealth and in the green of life,
Exceeds, for magnificence, even Chi-lun;

He favors girls of lowly birth and teaches them to dance,
And he gives away his coral-trees to almost anyone.

The wind of dawn just stirs when his nine soft lights go out,
Those nine soft lights like petals in a flying chain of
flowers.

From play to play they have barely time for singing over
the songs;

No sooner are they dressed again than incense burns before
them.

Those they know in town are only the rich and the lavish,
And day and night they're visiting the homes of Chao and
Li. . . .

Who cares about a girl from Yueh, face jade-white,
Humble, poor, alone, by the river, washing silk!

[240]

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

HARMONIZING A POEM BY PALACE-ATTENDANT KUO

High beyond the thick wall a tower shines with sunset,
Where peach and plum are blooming and willow-cotton
flies.

You have heard it in your office, the court-bell of twilight:
Birds discover perches, officials head for home.

Your morning-jade will tinkle as you thread the golden
palace,

You will bring the word of heaven from the closing gates
at night.

And I should serve there with you; but, being full of years,
I have put aside official robes and am resting from my ills.

A GREEN STREAM

I have come on the River of Yellow Flowers,
Borne by the current of a green stream
Rounding ten thousand turns through the mountains
To journey less than a hundred li.

Rapids hum on scattered stones,
Light is dim in the close pines,
The surface of an inlet sways with nut-horns,
Weeds are lush along the banks.

Down in my heart I have always been clear
As this clarity of waters.

Oh, to remain on a broad flat rock
And cast my fishing-line forever!

Translated from the Chinese

by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

IN PRAISE OF ABRIGADA

I had been told
A foolish tale—
Of stone—dank—cold:
But you,
Held to wide winter storm,
To clutch of blackening frost and ocean gale,
Are warm!

I thought that stone was silent too,
Unmoved by beauty,
Unaware of season or of mirth:
But I hear laughter, singing, as I lay
My face against your gray;
Surely I hear the ritual of far waves
And scent their winging spray,
Mixed with wild-rose and honeysuckle,
Budding sassafras,
And the cool breath of pungent, leafy bay.

I knew that walls were sheltering
And strong;
But you have sheltered love so long
That love is part
Of your high towering,
Lifting you higher still,
As heart lifts heart. . . .

[242]

Leonora Speyer

Hush!
How the whip-poor-will
Wails from his bush:
The thrush
Grows garrulous with delight!
There is a rapture in that liquid monotone,
"Bob White! Bob—*White!*"
Dear living stone!

.
In the great room below,
Where arches hold the listening spaces,
Flames crackle, leap and gleam
In the deep fire-places;
Memories dream . . .
Of other memories, perhaps,
Of gentle lives,
Of births, and of those other births that men call death,
Of voices, foot-steps tapping the stone floor,
And faces . . . faces . . .

Beyond, the open door,
The meadows drowsy with the moon,
The faint outline of dune,
The lake, the silver magic in the trees:
Walls, you are one with these!

.
High on the loggia-roof,
Under the stars as pale as they,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Two silent ones have crept away,
Seeking the deeper silence lovers know:
Into the radiant shadows of the night,
Into the aching beauty of the night,
They dare to go!

The moon
Is a vast cocoon,
Spinning her wild, white thread
Across the sky.
A thousand crickets croon
Their sharp-edged lullaby.
I hear a murmuring of lips on lips:
"All that I am, beloved!
All!"—
Lovers' eternal cry!
Lift them still higher, wall!

.

You stand serene:
The great winds linger, lean
Upon your breast;
The mist
Lifts up a gray face to be kissed;
The east and west
Hang you with banners,
Flaunt their bold victories of dusk and dawn;
Seasons salute you as they pass,
Call to you and are gone.

Leonora Speyer

Amid your meadow-grass
Lush, green,
You stand serene.

.
Houses, like hearts, are living, loving,
Joyful or woeful,
Forget or are forgot;
Houses, like tired hearts,
Sicken at last, and die,
Crumble and rot:
But they who know you, Abrigada,
They—and I—
Forget you not!

.
Nor they who stand on Abrigada's roof,
Glowing, aloof!

.
Come with me now,
Climb with me, stand, look down
In new content of mood,
Withdrawn from clasp of crowd
And tangle of the town!
Climb swifter still—
From safe companionship of cloud
The deeper to look down!

Not back!
Forget the thirst, the sordid cup,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The plethora, the piteous lack;
Forget the trafficking in tears,
The arrogance of scars.
Look up . . .
To dream undaunted dreams aloud,
And stumble toward the stars!

.
*This be in praise
Of Abrigada;
In all the ways
That come to me
Through the wise, wistful summer days.
In speech, in rhyme and rhythm of word—
Call it a poem, maybe!
In song—tuck the brown shining wood
Under my chin!
Call it my bird,
My heart,
My violin!
In prayer . . .
In dream . . .
In silence, best of all,
Leaning on the beloved dew-drenched wall.
Leaning and lifting . . .
High . . .
With Abrigada's gesture toward the sky.*

Leonora Speyer

AN OLD WOMAN

Something within her makes her live so long—

It pays no heed that all her friends are dead.

Her age is moving as a simple song,

Wailing that happy days long since are dead.

Something forgets that all her teeth have dropt,

That eyes no longer serve to see her ways.

Time seems not weary of this weed uncropt,

And draws her on into these newer days.

She does not know at night if she will rise

And wake again to live another day.

Eternity of age now makes her wise—

A thing on point of passing, hear her say:

“The moon outlasts my days; the sleepless hounds
Bark ever in the night—strange haunting sounds.”

I COMPLAIN IN PASSING

I am weary of green in the grass,

Of green in the trees;

Of blue in the sky, of white on the clouds,

And things like these.

I pray for one boon down the long white day—

That I may cease;

For mountain and meadow and grove and sky

Leave me no peace.

Harlow Clarke

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

WINTER DAWN

The dark rolls back.
Like dropped stars,
The willows shine on the sides of the water-courses:
Their ice-blades clash,
Making a slow thin music.
So wakes he, Tem-Sotetc-Kwi;
So comes he slowly—like a slow thin music.
Ah—ah—hi-i, brothers! Lovers of trails and sea-paths!
It is the time of sorrow and the time of shutting-in:
For he has come again—Tem-Sotetc-Kwi—
With heavy winds,
Like frozen ropes of cedar, hoary,
Uncoiling from his thighs
To bind the world.

I have seen his white moccasins upon the mountain:
His steps have hushed the waters
Of the great and little falls;
The rushing rivers are stopped.
He has fed the lake's watery breast to the White Bear
That follows him.
The canoes of the Coast-dwellers are hung under the roofs
Like empty cradles:
We can no longer rock on the wings of the great Blue
Heron!

The great Blue Heron has hidden herself

[248]

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Under the thatch of her nest,
Because of his pale gray foxes, with white ears—
His hungry foxes,
Huddled about the brink of her nest.
He has taken away the brown fields,
Where our bare feet danced with Autumn
At the feast of berries and maize—
The bare brown fields that were glad
When we drummed with our brown bare feet,
Singing, "Hoy-mah-ah! hoy a-mah!"

Ai-hi! The mats his witch-woman weaves for him are
thick and cold:

We have put beaver-fur about our feet,
And made us long, long flat shoes to bear us up.
(This is our magic, wise men's magic,
To save us from the White Bear's maw!)
His great snowy owls fill all our cedars.
Aii-hi! The red breasts of woodpeckers
No longer flicker in our forests.
His witch-woman is plucking the wings of the sky,
The air is stuffed with white feathers:
We no longer may speak with the sun—ai-i!
Gravely, with bowed hearts, we greet you,
O Tem-Sotetc-Kwi, Snow-chief, Ice-hunter,
Priest of the Long White Moons!

Slowly, slowly, like thin music,
Murmur the sorrow-chant,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Coast-dwellers, my brothers:
For Tem-Sotetc-Kwi has carved the death totem
Over Swiya's house-door—
Q'ulx—se—wag—ila—making pure!
Our mother Swiya, Swiya our mother is dead.
Sorrow, sorrow, my tribe, for Swiya!

Much joy had Swiya, our mother, who loved three lovers!
As a maid, boldly she went forth
And met Spring among the willows;
He pierced her with hope.
Singing she entered the green doors of Summer;
Singing she came out, girdled with fragrance.
She took the yellow harvest-moon in her hands,
And waited in the maize-fields behind our village.
Autumn clasped her there in the fields; he crowned her
with maize,
He filled her pouch with berries, he gave her much deer's
meat.

Autumn, Feast-maker! Dearest was he among her three
lovers—
He was the strong one: he gave the most food; he was the
last.
Ai! great joy had Swiya, our mother, who loved three
lovers,
And took their gifts.
All their gifts were ours: Swiya, our mother, kept nothing
back.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Now she lies bare, her hands are empty, her face is cold;
Her eyelids are shut, for her eyes are in the Place of Death,
Under white eyelids! *Q'ulx—se-wag-ila!*

Tem-Sotetc-Kwi has carved the death-totem over Swiya's
door.

Slowly, softly, like thin music, murmur the sorrow-chant
For Swiya, our mother. Swiya, our mother, is dead.

Q'ulx—se—Q'ulx-se-wag-ila wa!

Gravely, with bowed hearts, we greet you,
O Tem-Sotetc-Kwi, Snow-chief, Ice-hunter,
Priest of the Long White Moons!

Constance Lindsay Skinner

FROM A CHICAGO "L"

The great gray houses walk along
Sombrely and slow,

Weary in the dusk,

In a dragging row.

They are very tired,

Heart-broken and old;

They seem to shudder as they pass,

The winter wind is cold.

Sarah-Margaret Brown

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FATE

I

I have so often
Examined all this well-known room
That I inhabit.

There is the open window;
There the locked door, the door I cannot open,
The only doorway.

When at the keyhole often, often
I bend and listen, I can always hear
A muffled conversation.

An argument:
An angry endless argument of people
Who live behind;

Now loudly talking,
Now dimly to their separate conflict moving
Behind the door.

There they seem prisoned,
As I, in this lone room that I inhabit:
My life; my body.

You, of the previous being,
You who once made me and who now discuss me,
Tell me your verdict, and I will obey it!
You, long ago,

[252]

Harold Monroe

With doubting hands and eager trembling fingers,
Prepared my room.

Before I came,
Each gave his token for remembrance, brought it,
And then retired behind the bolted door.

There is the pot of honey
One left, and there the jar of vinegar
On the same table.

Who poured that water
Shining beside the flask of yellow wine?
Who sighed so softly?

Who brought that living flower to the room?
Who groaned, that I can ever hear the echo?
You do not answer.

Meanwhile from out the window
Sounds penetrate of building other houses:
Men building houses.

And so it may be
Some day I'll find some doorway in the wall—
What shall I take them?

What shall I take them
Beyond those doorways, in the other rooms?
What shall I bring them,
That they may love me?

[253]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Fatal question!
For all the jangling voices rise together;
I seem to hear:

"What shall he take them?" . . .
Beyond their closed door there's no final answer.
They are debating.

II

O Fate! Have you no other gift
Than voices in a muffled room?
Why do you live behind your door,
And hide yourself in angry gloom?

And why, again, should you not have
One purpose only, one sole word,
Ringing forever round my heart,
Plainly delivered, plainly heard?

Your conversation fills my brain
And tortures all my life, and yet
Gives no result. I often think
You've grown so old that you forget;

And having learnt man's fatal trick
Of talking, talking, talking still,
You're tired of definite design,
And laugh at having lost your will.

Harold Monro

HILLSIDE POEMS

WINTER RAIN

It is sad, this rain
Drip-dripping in the night
Monotonously
Into the snow;
Dripping from the corners of the house
And the ends of black twigs
All night long without change.
Rain, rain soft-fingered,
Lifting up the white snow,
Uncovering the clay beneath;
Rain, soft,
Almost unwilling—
The fingers of an old woman
Who cannot resist
Slipping downstairs in the night
To the front room,
And lifting the sheet for a last look
At what it conceals.

A NAKED MAPLE

You have put off your leaves.
You are like a runner who stands naked at the mark,
Calm and certain of victory.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

You are glorious in your ease,
Waiting for the first silver whistle of the snow;
And in your sureness
That the yellow medal of a May moon will be pinned to
your breast,
Clothed again and triumphant.

NOONTIME

Noontime and locusts,
Locusts goading the heat
Quivering over the hay-fields;
Yet the men arise from half-eaten dinners
And hood canvas over the stacks—
The full tawny breasts of the hayfields—
For the first dark finger of lust
Is pointing over a steeple
Far in the distance.

JUDGES

Between her two brothers,
Who argue of nations and laws
With a neighbor,
She stands, big with a child,
Watching the sunshine;
Waiting the end of their talk,
Saying nothing.

[256]

Frederick R. McCreary

ALONE ON THE HILL

Alone on the hill
In the warm October noon,
With the woods below
And beyond their brilliance the sea:
The moment has come,
The rapt still instant of being,
When water and wood are gone.
There is nothing now
But the on-running fluid of hours
Gleaming with blue, yellow, crimson.
Now quick! Let me run on sharp stones,
Let me strangle in surf choked with the bitter salt-water!
Let me feel pain, feel torture,
And the acid hunger of loneliness!
Give me self, self—
Before I am lost
In this madness of space eternal,
This horror of dream triumphant.

Frederick R. McCreary

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

INCIDENTALS

DUST IN THE ROAD

The dust
Is a yellow-grey veil
Over the limbs of the wind.
And the little breeze dons it,
That her fleet litheness,
And the whirling torsions of her sprite's form,
May be apparent
As she gaily runs down the road
To greet us.

TAPS

Out of the night,
Up from the serene valley of the Missouri,
Over the free forested Kansas hills
Come notes of a bugle—
Mincing, silver-slippered steps of music.

THE STAR

When the "screws" had made their last round
And the lights in the cells were out,
I arose and peered out the window.
And just over the edge of the prison-wall
I saw a tiny, twinkling, yellow star

[258]

Hi Simons

Furtively winking at me,
Like the eye of the Infinite;
Mischievously happy
Because it had slipped me a bit of joy
Over the wall, from "the outside."

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD ROUÉ

The seeds of his sin
Thrust tiny red roots
Among the cell-crevices of his face.
Now their minute purple tendrils
Trace, on his cheeks and nose,
Vine-patterns as intricately beautiful
As his fastidious iniquities.

Hi Simons

TAK FOR SIDST

To C. S.

"Good-bye," you said, and your voice was an echo, a
promise.
You turned to go, a grey iron ghost.
The night took you.
Insubstantial as air, stronger than iron,
You were here and had gone.
Your voice was an omen, an echo.

Babette Deutsch

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

IN THE OFFICE

THE GUARDIANS

Old men nodding over great books,
Always writing with gold pens,
Every morning
Adding figures,
Turning pages;
Every morning
A little grayer,
A little mustier,
A little older.

Old men!—do you keep Age
Hidden between your desks?
Will she catch me
If I come down to ask you
For the October statement?

AILEEN

She goes through the order of the day
Like a nun.
The rattle of her typewriter
Is the rustle of a rosary;
And she speaks in the telephone
With the retreated delicacy
Of one who murmurs before an altar.

Gwendolen Haste

MOTHERHOOD

Playing alone by the ocean's edge,
Eager and unafraid,
You are the child I used to be,
Playing the games I played.

Now I have only a coward's heart,
Finding you all too dear,
Learning at last that love shall teach
The fearless how to fear.

You are so little against the sky,
Laughing and undismayed—
Oh, little son by the ocean's edge,
I am afraid, afraid!

Medora C. Addison

THE LOVER

You do not know the wonder I will pour on your name—
It will burst like thunder with all heaven for a frame!
I will raise it as a flame that the wind blows under,
I will cast myself asunder—to my shame, to my blame!
I will make a fame, a wonder of your name.

Paul Tanaquil

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FIRE

Love, let us light
A fire tonight,
A wood fire on the hearth.

With torn and living tongues the flames leap.
Hungriily
They catch and lift, to beat their sudden wings
Toward freedom and the sky.
The hot wood sings
And crackles in a pungent ecstasy
That seems half pain of death, and half a vast
Triumphant exultation of release
That its slow life-time of lethargic peace
Should come to this wild rapture at the last.

We watch it idly, and our casual speech
Drops slowly into silence.
Something stirs and struggles in me,
Something out of reach
Of surface thoughts, a slow and formless thing—
Not I, but a dim memory
Born of the dead behind me. In my blood
The blind race turns, groping and faltering.

Desires
Only half glimpsed, not understood,
Stir me and shake me. Fires

Eunice Tietjens

Answer the fire, and vague shapes pass
Like shapes of wind across the grass.

The red flames catch and lift,
Roaring and sucking in a furious blaze;
And a strange, swift
Hunger for violence is in me. My blood pounds
With a dark memory of age-old days,
And mad red nights I never knew,
When the dead in me lived, and horrid sounds
Broke from their furry throats.
In drunken rounds,
Blood-crazed, they danced before the leaping flames,
While something twisted in the fire. . . .

Now as the flames mount higher
Strange pictures pass. I cannot see them quite
And yet I feel them.

I am in a dread
Dark temple, and I beat my head
In maddened rite,
Before the red-hot belly of a god
Who eats his worshippers. . . .

This is a funeral pyre
And one lies dead
Who was my life. The fat smoke curls and eddies,
Beckoning suttee. . . .

But the moment slips
To Bacchanalian revels—quick hot lips

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And leaping limbs, lit by the glare
Of human torches. . . .

A sudden spark
Goes crackling upward, followed by a shower;
And I am in the hills, cool hills and dark,
Primeval as the fire. The beacon flare
Leaps in a roaring tower,
Spattering in sparks among the stars
Tales of wild wars.
And on a distant crest
Its mate makes answer. . . .

But the embers gleam
Like molten metal steaming at a forge,
Where with rough jest
Great lusty fellows
Ply the roaring bellows,
And clang the song of labor—and the dream
Man builds in metal. . . .

Now the red flame steadies.
Softly and quietly it burns,
Purring, and its embers wear
A friendly and domestic air.

This is the hearth-fire—home and peace at last.
Comfort and safety are attendant here.
The primal fear
Is shut away, to whistle in the blast

Eunice Tietjens

Beyond the doorway where the shadows twine.
The fire is safety, and the fire is home,
Light, warmth and food. Here careless children come
Filling the place with laughter;
And after
Men make good council-talk, and old men spin,
With that great quiet of the wise,
Tales of dead beauty, and of dying eyes.

The fire is drooping now. A log falls in
Softly upon itself, like one grown tired
With ecstasy. The lithe tongues sink
In ash and ember:
And something I remember
From ages gone—and yet I cannot think—
Some secret of the end,
Of earth grown old, and death turned friend,
And man who passes
Like flame, like light, like wind across the grasses.

Ah, what was that? A sudden terror sped
Behind me in the shadows. I am cold;
And I should like your hand to hold
Now that the fire is dead.
Love, light the lamp, and come away to bed.
Fire is a strange thing, burning in your head.

Eunice Tietjens

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

THE UTTERANCE OF POETRY

IN the *Literary Review* of a recent New York *Evening Post* Lawrence Mason tells whimsically of the tortures he has endured in hearing poetry read aloud. Listing "several different methods," he says:

Some chant or intone it in a dulcet sing-song that woos reluctant slumber from her lair. Some attack it with athletic vigor, and pride themselves upon the sheer speed of their delivery. Others find the *summum bonum* in emphasizing the beat with the deadly regularity of a metronome. Still others coldly isolate and anatomize each line till there is no more savor in it than in a dried prune. Others, again, so boggle and halt and garble and apologize and re-read that the hearer is driven to madness, despair, or violent revolt.

And he refers to a cousin "whose method is none of these—his sole and sufficient guiding principle is to conceal from his unfortunate hearers every evidence of versification."

Mr. Mason's suffering reminds me of my own experience with a certain "eminent dramatic revelator" (so advertised) who for two seasons has given expensive recitals in Chicago under the alleged patronage of women of social prominence, of whom some, as I definitely ascertained, had never consented to the use of their names, and others had consented in a mistaken impulse of kindness while in blessed ignorance of the man and his "art." The revelator, whose programs ranged from *Othello* to *Deburau*, followed the method of Mr. Mason's

The Utterance of Poetry

cousin, but enriched it with a kind of vocal gymnastics inherited from the elocutionary school of the eighteen-seventies. While the three-dollar-a-head audience sat in silence under the infliction, I amused myself, during the half-hour or so that a heroic sense of duty held me there, in certain speculations about the simple, but much abused art of reading poetry aloud.

It would seem to be a rare gift—the beautiful reading of poetry. Even the poets themselves are often disappointing, though there is usually a degree of beauty and illumination to be gained from a poet's reading of his own verse. The poet instinctively emphasizes rhythm, sometimes even to the point of intoning or chanting it; indeed, he rarely carries this too far. But not all poets have good voices, an accent neither too local nor too studiously correct, and a simple effective delivery.

Certain poets, of course, it is a privilege to hear—their reading is as much a work of art as the poem, and the two fit together in indissoluble unity. I used to feel this of Lindsay, whose first reading of *The Congo* at POETRY's first banquet—in March, 1914—was a triumph in the double art. But of late Lindsay has acquired bad habits—his reading has become too loud and melodramatic. John Masefield's very simple reading of his poems is beautiful beyond words, because of that marvellous bass voice of his, rich with all the sorrows of the world. Carl Sandburg also has a deep-toned organ in his throat which he uses with subtle simplicity in the proof of his delicate

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

rhythms. The fine voice of William Butler Yeats is of higher pitch than these; his quiet intoning of poetry nobly illustrates its beauty. Lew Sarett's presentation of his Indian poems is their perfect and almost necessary completion. Robert Frost's personality and voice also fulfil and emphasize the quality of his poems. Witter Bynner has a rich voice and graceful delivery, but an over-precise utterance mars the effect of his reading for me. Alfred Kreymborg, Carlos Williams, Maxwell Bodenheim—each of these complements his very personal rhythm in the utterance of his poems. And Padraic Colum brings to us the authentic Celtic tune—he is even more of an Irishman than Mr. Yeats.

I wish I could say as much for the women. Amy Lowell, Eunice Tietjens, Lola Ridge, Helen Hoyt, Marjorie Seiffert, Florence Frank, Jean Untermeyer—all these read well, some of them brilliantly; all simply, and in rhythmic fulfilment of their poems. But none of them with quite the artistic beauty which some of the men have attained.

On the stage one rarely hears beautiful utterance of poetry. In all my unusual experience of theatricalized Shakespeare, which, beginning with Edwin Booth in my sixth year, includes almost every distinguished interpreter since his time, I have heard only one whose reading of the lines—no, not reading, not anything remembered and recited—whose spontaneous utterance of the lines—seems to me of such perfection, such strange

The Utterance of Poetry

and consummate beauty, as to be forever memorable and—alas—incomparable. This was Ada Rehan: to hear her as Viola or Rosalind was to be moved by a voice, deep and rich like falling waters, which turned English words into speech-music of transcendent quality, music that moved one like Kubelik's violin or Isadora Duncan's dancing.

Among women, Ellen Terry was perhaps Miss Rehan's closest rival; but her voice was not quite so bitter-sweet, and there was a slight jerkiness in her delivery which gave it vitality and picturesqueness but detracted from absolute music. Mary Anderson had a voice like a cello, of extraordinary richness and range, and a fine sense of poetic cadence; but her delivery, though beautiful, to be remembered always with joy, was more deliberate and studied, leaning more to the old rhetorical school.

Booth was wonderful, of course—my youth shone with the romantic glamour of him. But it must be admitted that Booth mouthed his lines by overstressing his consonants, and that his delivery was not the spontaneous utterance of perfect art but the brilliant recital of speeches learned. He was a great artist of his Victorian time and his somewhat rhetorical school; but he was not an originator, not one of the genius-illuminated who strike out new times, new methods.

Henry Irving had a more far-seeing mind, but his gift was for the spectacular. His speech was gusty and storm-ridden, his cadences churned and broken like a bold

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

skiff outriding a gale. It was an adventure to listen to the lines of his Shylock—the poetry was so often in danger and so unexpectedly triumphant. He ranted early and often, but his ranting was always in the picture, always in the service of a deliberate conventionalization, a planned and achieved pattern. The modern poetic drama has scrapped his particular convention; but we may still envy him his skill, for we cannot yet claim to have established our own convention.

If Booth and Irving ranted sometimes, Lawrence Barrett ranted always; and John McCullough was seldom above the temptation, although his robust blank verse had always a certain beauty of cadence. Richard Mansfield came in a time of more simple Thespian manners, but he broke up the lines, he had no sense of rhythm; whether in *Henry Fifth* or *Beau Brummel*, he spoke always prose. Of all the male actors I have heard, Forbes-Robertson is the most assured master of poetic cadence; but his reading of Shakespeare, though beautiful, is sophisticated and deliberate—it lacks the spontaneity, and also the variety, which made Ada Rehan's, and even Ellen Terry's, a continual flaring of new fires.

The Irish Players are rhythmically endowed beyond any other company of my remembrance; which is not strange, since Irish speech is musical with poetic cadence, and these players were trained by Synge and Yeats and Lady Gregory, the three poets who have used it to the highest poetic purpose. This beautiful rhythmic speech has been

The Utterance of Poetry

the secret of their charm, the one most potent reason for the effect of artistic unity and beauty in their rendition of the great plays of the Celtic renaissance.

The subject has led me to reminiscence when inquiry was intended—we have lingered with the masters instead of seeking examples in common life. If few actors read poetry with due regard for the rhythm, still fewer public readers have any conception of the primary principles of the art they profess, even when they have freed themselves of the hideous old elocutionary tradition which deliberately destroyed poetic cadence, broke up the lines, and turned poetry into agonizing prose.

This tradition is chiefly to blame for banishing from modern life an art which should be at least as common and friendly a pleasure and solace as music. A good voice, a sense of rhythm, simple unexaggerated utterance, all showing respect for the line and revealing the larger cadences which overlie the basic pattern—such a combination may make the reading-aloud of poetry, in any household or group of friends, a joy as fine as the excellent playing of a musical instrument.

More encouragement of this art might reveal and develop exceptional talent in persons scarcely aware of it. I remember an exquisite out-door presentation of Ernest Dowson's *Pierrot of the Minute* by two young sisters who had never realized their rare gift for the most delicate musical subtleties of poetic dialogue. And in the history department of the University of Chicago hides a

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

certain modest professor whose reading of the *Ode to a Nightingale* gives his friends an experience as magnificent as Muratore ever offered with his proudest solo, or Paderewski in his palmiest days.

The reading of poetry should be an easily accessible delight instead of the bore which it usually is. The defect chiefly to be avoided is a certain high-sounding rotundity which most people assume like a toga when they start to read poetry aloud. Most voices need training, to be sure, to develop the latent beauty in them; every school should teach the proper use of this delicate musical instrument within us. Given a good voice properly controlled, an ear for poetic rhythm, and the simplest possible observance of the pitches and tones of poetically enhanced speech, and you have the beginning of good reading of poetry—a beginning which practice, and the stimulus of emotional and imaginative intensity, may develop into high artistic beauty.

H. M.

TRANSLATING WANG WEI

Just as Tu Fu and Li Po are often spoken of in conjunction by the Chinese, so are two other great poets of the T'ang Dynasty, Meng Hao-jan and Wang Wei. The latter, who lived 699-759 A. D., is distinguished among the poets of China by a deep and beautiful optimism. The melancholy that wounded Tu Fu and Meng Hao-jan seems not to have touched Wang Wei beneath the surface.

[272]

Translating Wang Wei

And, whereas Li Po sought in wine solace from the ills and sorrows of life, Wang Wei found an abiding content in the "green and healing hills" and in the highly humbled and attuned mysticism of Lao-tzu's teaching.

As a young man, Wang Wei became Assistant Secretary of State; but at the age of thirty-one, when his wife died, he left his post and retired to live near Mount Chung-nan. Two of his poems about Mount Chung-nan are published in this number, both breathing the sober sweetness and simplicity of his retired life. One of them begins with the line, "My heart in middle age found the Way"; the Chinese word for the Way being Tao, the first character of the title of Lao-tzu's book, *Tao-Te-Ching*, which may be translated in whole as *The Way and the Exemplification*. Taoism appears, then, to have been the consolation of Wang Wei, although Professor Herbert M. Giles, in his volume *Chinese Literature*, declares it to have been Buddhism. We realize, not only from the direct statement in this one poem, but from the spirit of all his poems, that he had serenely accepted the Way, the natural way of the universe.

There was for a while a strong division between the followers of Lao-tzu and the followers of Confucius. Po Chu-yi ridiculed Taoist doctrines in the following four lines, crisply translated by Professor Giles:

"Who know speak not, who speak know naught,"
Are words from Lao-tzu's lore.
What then becomes of Lao-tzu's own
Five thousand words or more?

[273]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The answer is that Lao-tzu's words, fused now with both Buddhism and Confucianism, have become an integral part of the religion of China. Here are two characteristic quotations from his gospel:

Follow diligently the Way in your own heart, but make no display of it to the world.

Do nothing, and all things will be done.

Among the selections printed in this issue, note the last two lines of the poem, *Answering Vice-Prefect Chang*: a question asked in terms of complicated morality and answered in terms of simple happiness:

You ask me about good and evil?

Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing.

This does not mean that the ideal Taoist literally "did nothing." As a matter of fact Wang Wei was a physician, a high government official, a great poet, and also one of China's most illustrious painters. (A scroll attributed to him is on view at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.) His activities, however, were all in flow with universal forces: they sang like the fisherman—there was no fret, no jealousy, no self-exaltation, no irritated struggle; only harmony, humility, exalted identity with nature—a true and wide knowledge of values, making him a master of words, a master of the brush, and a master of life. Yes, there was a sure gaiety in Wang Wei, instanced in his *Message to P'ai Ti*, the fellow-poet with whom he longed to drink again and to "sing a wild

Translating Wang Wei

poem"; or in the verses already mentioned, *My Retreat at Chung-nan*, in which he happily anticipated the day when he should "meet an old wood-cutter, and talk and laugh and never return."

In the last two lines of the poem to P'ai Ti, he addressed his friend, according to a too frequent Chinese manner, by the name of Chieh-yu, who was a recluse of the Ch'u kingdom, famous somewhat for drinking, but more for stopping Confucius' chariot and warning him against politics with the song:

O phoenix, O phoenix,
Virtue is corrupted!
What is past is past all counsel,
What is future may be moulded. . . .
Come away! Come away!
Politics are dangerous!

And Wang Wei's reference in the final line of this same poem is to the place where he will be drinking with his friend; yet Five Willows is the place named, where long ago T'ao Ch'ien had lived, another famous recluse who was both a great writer and a great drinker.

The last two lines of the poem *In my Lodge at Wang-Ch'uan after a Long Rain*, clear and significant as they are in themselves, yet contain, for the Chinese reader, enriching allusion and connotation. There was once a scholar, Yang-tzu, who, before he became a student of Lao-tzu, was highly respected and honored by his fellow-men. Later, through the many years of his discipleship, he lost his prestige, and even a boor would take precedence over

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

him; but he was glad because he had formerly been proud and pretentious. The last line refers to a hermit who was fond of sea-gulls; they followed him wherever he went. His father asked why they were not afraid and bade the son bring him some; but next day, when the hermit went out intending to take them to his father, they all flew away.

The poem in the group most in need of explanation, because of its allusion to historic events and personages, is *The Beautiful Hsi-shih*; and the last two lines of *A Song of Young Girls from Lo-Yang* also require the following summary:

During the Chou Dynasty, when the Yueh kingdom was conquered by the Wu kingdom, the Yueh king still held his throne and plotted to throw off the tributary yoke. Aided by his able minister, Fan Li, he planned to distract the king of Wu with women. Fan Li searched through the Yueh kingdom for girls to beguile him and came upon Hsi-shih washing clothes by a lake. Conquering his own love for her, he fiercely persuaded her to his scheme. She remained at court for some time; and the Wu king, in his infatuation, forgot affairs of state. Weakened by this means, the Wu kingdom was overcome by the Yueh kingdom; and Fan Li eventually accepted Hsi-shih as his reward. The whimsical phrasing of the line "If by wrinkling their brows they can copy her beauty" alludes to the fact that she had heart trouble, and it was said that her drawn brows, her look of gentle-

ness in suffering, which the girls of her time tried unsuccessfully to imitate, made her more beautiful.

One might enlarge upon references in others of the poems. For instance, the quatrain called *Lines* contains the phrase "my silken window." This is not a decorative adjective. It merely means that, before the use of paper or glass, windows in China were of silk. The last line of the same poem is made lovelier by knowledge that the *mei*, or plum blossom, is in China the earliest flower of spring. It is interesting to know that *A Song at Wei-Cheng*, which was written for music, is still popular through China as a song of farewell, and that to this day "since we picked willow-branches at Wei-Cheng" means "since we parted." The beauty of the four lines called *A Parting*, with its simple, profound expression of the abiding presence of friendly nature and the transient presence of friendly man, is heightened by the reader's response to the grace of the name Wang Sun, which from a dim and ancient origin still means in China a noble-hearted young scholar, or sometimes lover. But on the whole, these T'ang poems are so valid and universal in uttering beauty that they may vitally enter the poetic consciousness of a westerner still ignorant of the various allusions.

Translating the work of Wang Wei and others in the *Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty*, Dr. Kiang and I have tried constantly to transfer the Chinese idiom into an equivalent idiom in English, rather than to stress the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

local novelty and pungency of Chinese phrasing. It would be as erroneous to overemphasize the component radicals of a Chinese character as to overemphasize the component meanings of such words in English as day-break, breakfast, nightfall or landscape. The delicate importance of the translator's office lies in bringing from one language to another the rounded and proportioned effect of a whole poem. And we, conscientiously, have tried to make felt, in our translations, the high honesty and wise humanness of poets who have in many ways, and in one Wei especially, lived closer to the heart of life than importunate passion brings the poets of the West.

Witter Bynner

Note by the Editor: Mr. Bynner's preference for the line of four feet and for the four-line or eight-line poem is his tribute to the close prosodic structure of Chinese poetry. In the translator's opinion the form he has chosen is the closest approach to the original which is possible in English.

REVIEWS

A COOL MASTER

Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson (with portrait frontispiece). Macmillan Co.

Near the middle of the last century, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a sentimental philosopher with a genius for a sudden twisted hardness of words, wrote lines like:

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,

[278]

A Cool Master

And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.

And it was with Emerson that American poetry may be said to have begun. He was slight enough, but at his best a master, and above all a master of sound. And he began a tradition that still exists.

He was followed shortly by Emily Dickinson, a master of a certain dowdy but undeniably effective mannerism, a spinster who may have written her poems to keep time with her broom. A terrible woman, who annihilated God as if He were her neighbor, and her neighbor as if he were God—all with a leaf or a sunbeam that chanced to fall within her sight as she looked out the window or the door during a pause in her sweeping:

And we, we placed the hair,
And drew the head erect;
And then an awful leisure was,
Our faith to regulate.

The woman at her most terrible had the majesty of an erect corpse, a prophet of unspeakable doom; and she spoke through sealed lips. She was greater than Emerson, was one of the greatest poets of our language, but was more or less in the tradition that Emerson began. She and Emerson were probably the only poets of any permanently great importance who occurred in this country during their period.

The tradition of New England hardness has been carried on by Mr. Robinson, in many ways may be said

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

to have reached its pinnacle in Mr. Robinson. This poet, with a wider culture than his predecessors, has linked a suavity of manner to an even greater desperation than that of Dickinson's *The Last Night*—his hardness has become a polished stoniness of vision, of mind.

This man has the culture to know that to those to whom philosophy is comprehensible it is not a matter of the first importance; and he knows that these people are not greatly impressed by a ballyhoo statement of the principles of social or spiritual salvation. A few times he has given his opinion, but quietly and intelligently, and has then passed on to other things. A man's philosophical belief or attitude is certain to be an important part of his milieu, and as a part of his milieu may give rise to perceptions, images. His philosophy becomes a part of his life as does the country in which he was born, and will tinge his vision of the country in which he was born as that country may affect his philosophy. So long as he gives us his own perceptions as they arise in this milieu, he remains an artist. When he becomes more interested in the possible effects of his beliefs upon others, and expounds or persuades, he begins to deal with generalities, concepts (see Croce), and becomes a philosopher, or more than likely a preacher, a mere peddler. This was the fallacy of Whitman and many of the English Victorians, and this is what invalidates nearly all of Whitman's work. Such men forget that it is only the particular, the perception, that is perpetually startling. The generality, or concept,

can be pigeon-holed, absorbed, and forgotten. And a ballyhoo statement of a concept is seldom a concise one—it is neither fish nor flesh. That is why Whitman is doomed to an eventual dull vacuum that the intricately delicate mind of Plato will never know.

Much praise has fallen to Mr. Robinson because he deals with people, "humanity"; and this is a fallacy of inaccurate brains. Humanity is simply Mr. Robinson's physical milieu; the thing, the compound of the things, he sees. It is not the material that makes a poem great, but the perception and organization of that material. A pigeon's wing may make as great an image as a man's tragedy, and in the poetry of Mr. Wallace Stevens has done so. Mr. Robinson's greatness lies not in the people of whom he has written, but in the perfect balance, the infallible precision, with which he has stated their cases.

Mr. Robinson's work may be classified roughly in two groups—his blank verse, and his more closely rhymed poems, including the sonnets. Of his blank verse, the *Octaves* in *The Children of the Night* fall curiously into a group by themselves, and will be considered elsewhere in this review. The other poems in blank verse may be called sketches—some of people the poet may have known, some of historical figures, some of legendary—and they have all the evanescence, brittleness, of sketches. However, there are passages in many of these poems that anticipate Robert Frost, who in at least one poem, *An Old Man's Winter Night*, has used this method with greater

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

effect than its innovator, and has created a great poem. Mr. Frost, of course, leaves more of the bark on his rhythms, achieves a sort of implied colloquialism which has already been too much discussed. But with Frost in mind, consider this passage from *Isaac and Archibald*:

A journey that I made one afternoon
With Isaac to find out what Archibald
Was doing with his oats. It was high time
Those oats were cut, said Isaac; and he feared
That Archibald—well, he could never feel
Quite sure of Archibald. Accordingly
The good old man invited me—that is,
Permitted me—to go along with him;
And I, with a small boy's adhesiveness
To competent old age, got up and went.

The similarity to Frost is marked, as is also the pleasing but not profound quality of the verse. It has a distinction, however, that many contemporaries—French as well as English and American—could acquire to good advantage.

Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford, a much praised poem, seems largely garrulous, occasionally brilliant, and always brittle; and one can go on making very similar comments on the other poems in this form, until one comes to those alternately praised and lamented poems, *Merlin* and *Lancelot*. Remembering Tennyson, one's first inclination is to name these poems great, and certainly they are not inconsiderable. But there are long passages of purely literary frittering, and passages that, while they may possess a certain clean distinction of

manner, are dry and unremunerative enough. But there are passages in these poems which are finer than any other blank verse Mr. Robinson has written—dark, massive lines that rise out of the poem and leave one bitter and empty:

On Dagonet the silent hand of Merlin
Weighed now as living iron that held him down
With a primeval power. Doubt, wonderment,
Impatience, and a self-accusing sorrow
Born of an ancient love, possessed and held him
Until his love was more than he could name,
And he was Merlin's fool, not Arthur's now:
"Say what you will, I say that I'm the fool
Of Merlin, King of Nowhere; which is Here.
With you for king and me for court, what else
Have we to sigh for but a place to sleep?"

But passing on from this less important side of Mr. Robinson's work to his rhymed poems, one finds at least a large number of perfectly executed poems of a sensitive and feline approach. What effect rhyme, or the intention of rhyme, has upon an artist's product, is a difficult thing to estimate. The question verges almost upon the metaphysical. The artist, creating, lives at a point of intensity, and whether the material is consciously digested before that point is reached, and is simply organized and set down at the time of creation; or whether the point of intensity is first reached and the material then drawn out of the subconscious, doubtless depends a good deal on the individual poet, perhaps on the individual poem. The latter method presupposes a great deal of previous

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

absorption of sense impressions, and is probably the more valid, or at least the more generally effective, method. For the rhythm and the "matter," as they come into being simultaneously and interdependent, will be perfectly fused and without loose ends. The man who comes to a form with a definitely outlined matter, will, more than likely, have to cram or fill before he has finished, and the result is broken. The second method does not, of course, presuppose rhyme, but it seems that rhyme, as an obstacle, will force the issue.

The best of Mr. Robinson's poems appear to have come into being very much in this second fashion. He has spun his images out of a world of sense and thought that have been a part of him so long that he seems to have forgot their beginning—has spun these images out as the movement of his lines, the recurrence of his rhymes, have demanded them. A basic philosophy and emotional viewpoint have provided the necessary unity.

This method inevitably focuses the artist's mind upon the object of the instant, makes it one with that object, and eliminates practically all individual "personality" or self-consciousness. The so-called personal touch is reduced to a minimum of technical habit that is bound to accrue in time to any poet who studies his medium with an eye to his individual needs. The man of some intelligence who cannot, or can seldom, achieve this condition of fusion with his object, is driven back to his ingenuity; and this man, if he have sufficient intelligence or ingenuity,

becomes one of the "vigorous personalities" of poetry; and he misses poetry exactly in so far as his personality is vigorous. Browning, on two or three occasions one of the greatest of all poets, is, for the most part, simply the greatest of ingenious versifiers. He was so curious of the quirks with which he could approach an object, that he forgot the object in admiring, and expecting admiration for, himself. And it is for this reason that Mr. Robinson, working in more or less the same field as Browning, is the superior of Browning at almost every turn.

And it is for this reason also that Mr. Robinson's *Ben Jonson* is a failure. For the poet, while in no wise concerned with his own personality, is so intent upon the personality of Jonson, his speaker, that, for the sake of Jonson's vigor, he becomes talkative and eager of identifying mannerism; and the result is, that Shakespeare, about whom the poem is written, comes to the surface only here and there, and any actual image almost never.

The following stanza is an example of Mr. Robinson's work at its best:

And like a giant harp that hums
On always, and is always blending
The coming of what never comes
With what has past and had an ending,
The City trembles, throbs, and pounds
Outside, and through a thousand sounds
The small intolerable drums
Of Time are like slow drops descending.

And there is the compact, intensely contemplated statement of *Eros Turannos*, a poem that is, in forty-eight

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

lines, as complete as a Lawrence novel. And the nimble trickery of *Miniver Cheevy*, as finished a piece of burlesque as one can find in English. A few of us have feared, in the last few years, that Mr. Robinson was deteriorating; but going through this book one is reassured. If there is nothing in *The Three Taverns* to equal *Eros Turannos*, there are at least two or three poems as great as any save that one Mr. Robinson has written; and there is nothing in these last poems to preclude the possibility of another *Eros Turannos*.

Mr. Robinson, as probably the highest point in his tradition, has been followed by Frost, a more specialized, and generally softer artist. And there is Gould, who, if he belongs to the tradition at all, is a mere breaking-up of the tradition, a fusion with Whitman. But in considering the work of a man of so varied a genius as Mr. Robinson, it is interesting, if not over-important, to observe the modes of expression that he has anticipated if not actually influenced; even where he has not chosen, or has not been able to develop, these modes.

The resemblance in matter and manner, save for Mr. Robinson's greater suavity, of certain poems, especially the sonnets, in *The Children of the Night*, to the epigrams in *The Spoon River Anthology*, has been noted by other writers; and I believe it has been said that Mr. Masters was ignorant of the existence of these poems until after the *Anthology* was written. There is little to be said about such a poem as Mr. Robinson's *Luke Havergal*:

[286]

A Cool Master

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything:
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That blinds you to the way that you must go.

And Mr. Masters' satire has been forestalled and outdone
in these early sonnets.

But a more curious and interesting resemblance to a
later poet is found in the *Octaves* in the same volume:

To me the groaning of world-worshippers
Rings like a lonely music played in hell
By one with art enough to cleave the walls
Of heaven with his cadence, but without
The wisdom or the will to comprehend
The strangeness of his own perversity,
And all without the courage to deny
The profit and the pride of his defeat.

If the actual thought of this passage is not that of Wallace
Stevens, nevertheless the quality of the thought, the
manner of thinking, as well as the style, quite definitely is.
To what extent Mr. Robinson may have influenced this
greatest of living and of American poets, one cannot say,
but in at least three of the *Octaves*, one phase of Mr.
Stevens' later work—that of *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle*
and other recent and shorter poems—is certainly fore-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

shadowed. Mr. Robinson's sound is inevitably the less rich, the less masterly.

In another of the *Octaves* there are a few lines that suggest the earlier poems of Mr. T. S. Eliot, but the resemblance is fleeting and apparently accidental.

✓ If the tradition of New England seems to be reaching an end in the work of Mr. Frost, Mr. Robinson has at least helped greatly in the founding of a tradition of culture and clean workmanship that such poets as Messrs. Stevens, Eliot, and Pound, as H. D. and Marianne Moore, are carrying on. Mr. Robinson was, when he began, as much a pioneer as Mr. Pound or Mr. Yeats, and he has certainly achieved as great poetry. While the tradition begun, more or less, by Whitman, has deteriorated, in the later work of Mr. Carl Sandburg, into a sort of plasmodial delirium; and while the school of mellifluous and almost ominous stage-trappings, as exemplified by Poe, has melted into a sort of post-Celtic twilight, and has nearly vanished in the work of Mr. Aiken; the work of these writers and a few others stands out clear and hard in the half-light of our culture. I cannot forget that they exist, even in the face of the desert. *Yoor Winters*

MR. YEATS' PLAYS

Four Plays for Dancers, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Yeats is one of the few poets writing poetic plays who are also, in exact meaning, men of the theatre. Just

Mr. Yeats' Plays

as he is probably the foremost poet of his generation, so he shares with Gordon Craig and one or two others the distinction of having seen furthest into the theatre as it may become. That youth which in the Irish temperament is so old as to be imperishable has retained for him his leadership in the poetic drama and in the exploration of new forms. *Four Plays for Dancers*, as in its own time *The Land of Heart's Desire* (written "without adequate knowledge of the stage"!), is the work of a pioneer bringing a form to its perfection with no apparent interval of apprenticeship.

"My blunder has been," he writes, "that I did not discover in my youth that my theatre must be the ancient theatre that can be made by unrolling a carpet, or marking out a place with a stick, or setting a screen against a wall." When he was last in America he told us of such a theatre, so intimate that its few properties could be carried by the players in a taxicab and set in a drawing-room, and of how he had found a first model in the *Noh* stage of aristocratic Japan. Shortly afterward *The Only Jealousy of Emer* was published in POETRY; and now, with three other plays similar in construction, it appears in book form. There are also masks and costume plates by Edmond Dulac for *At the Hawk's Well*, produced as early as 1916 in England, music for the dances and songs by W. M. Rummel, and suggestive notes on the plays and their production.

Unhesitatingly one may call this book the most signifi-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

cant contribution to the art-theatre that has been written in a long while. True, it is the art-theatre in its most aristocratic phase; but the best in this art, as in another, must sometimes, in relation to audiences, be aristocratic. What gives to these plays their significance, apart from the almost ineffable beauty with which at least two of them are written, is that he has found a way by which the color, the enchantment, the distance and subtlety of legendary drama may be projected intimately and by a medium of amazing simplicity. In doing this, granting that one's insight into the effect of the plays in production is accurate, he has conquered difficulties which would seem insurmountable.

He has secured the illusion of distance, not in despite of, but *through*, the intimacy of a small audience in contact with the players. Never before in the western theatre, and in no other western art except perhaps that of the story-teller setting his tale directly in the imagination, has such an effect been possible. It is the quality of his technique, the unerring sense of the theatre, which seems to make this an authentic form both in these individual plays and as existing apart from them. Beside it the artificial intimacy effected by Max Reinhardt becomes clap-trap. Restricting himself to the simplest means, he has chosen them with the instinct of a poet, with that same instinct which made such lines as these of the Musician:

I call to the eye of the mind
A well long choked up and dry,
And boughs long stripped by the wind.

[290]

Mr. Yeats' Plays

And I call to the mind's eye
Pallor of an ivory face,
Its lofty dissolute air,
A man climbing up to a place
The salt sea wind has swept bare.

"In literature if we would not be parvenus we must have a model;" and as his theatre has been modified until it has become independent of the *Noh*, so a new poetic drama may be liberated by his inspiration.

As for the plays in relation to each other, we have learned long since to expect in the work of Mr. Yeats the clarity and beauty of poetic content and expression that one finds in these plays. We expect it; and it seldom fails the anticipation. If *The Dreaming of the Bones* and *Calvary* do not seem quite to reach the height of the two others, that is not to deny that they are rich in content also. But there is a beauty lacking in them, purity of inspiration replaced by what is not far from propaganda in the one and from an over-subtle interpretation in the other. The mood has flagged somewhat, after the splendor of utterance in *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer*. These are incomparable.

Postscript—to "Little Theatres": These plays, when you read them, may not appear difficult to present, what with the elaborate stage directions and the photographs. But I fear that you would find them impossible, lacking a Yeats, a Dulac, and a Michio Itow, who are indispensable. And it would be a mistake to confuse this theatre

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

in any way with the theatre of Jacques Copeau, which is also admirable. Mr. Yeats has not abandoned the *mise en scene*—he has intensified it. And, incidentally, he has given us, when we are ready for it, one kind of synthetic theatre, including even the management of light.

Cloyd Head

NOTES

Wang Wei, the famous poet-painter who lived in China thirteen centuries ago, interests Mr. Bynner more than any other Chinese poet, and is sufficiently introduced by his editorial. For nearly three years the two translators have been studying Chinese poetry of the great age for the benefit of readers of English, and their book of translations, *The Jade Mountain*, is to be published next autumn by Alfred A. Knopf.

Kiang Kang-hu, who is a scholar in both languages, made the literal English versions which Mr. Bynner, after close consultation over meanings and rhythms, has shaped into English poems.

Eunice Tietjens (Mrs. Cloyd Head) of Chicago, who is a member of POETRY's advisory committee, is the author of two books of verse—*Profiles from China* and *Body and Raiment* (Alfred A. Knopf).

Leonora Speyer (Mrs. Edgar S.), of New York, is the author of *A Canopic Jar* (E. P. Dutton & Co.). Abrigada is not a castle in Spain, but an old house in Long Island where the Speyers lived last summer.

Miss Constance Lindsay Skinner, of New York, received, in 1915, one of POETRY's prizes for her group of Indian poems, *Songs of the Coast-dwellers*. She has not yet printed a volume of her Indian interpretations, but many of them may be found in George W. Cronyn's anthology, *The Path on the Rainbow* (Boni & Liveright).

Mr. Harold Monroe, of London, author of three or four books of verse and editor of *The Chap Book*, will publish this spring, through the Poetry Book Shop, of which he is chief, a new book of poems, *Real Property*.

Babette Deutsch (Mrs. A. Yarmolinsky), of New York, is the author of *Banners* (George H. Doran Co.). Mr. and Mrs. Yarmolinsky together translated from the Russian *The Twelve*, by the late Alexander Blok,

which was published in 1920 by B. W. Huebsch, with an introduction by the translators; and they have just issued, through Harcourt, Brace & Co., *Modern Russian Poetry: An Anthology*.

"Paul Tanaquil" is a cosmopolite resident of Coronado, Cal.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Medora C. Addison (Mrs. Charles Read Nutter), of Concord, Mass., will soon publish, through the Yale Univ. Press, her first book of verse, *Dreams and a Sword*.

Mr. F. R. McCreary is a young poet of Cambridge, Mass. Miss Gwendolen Haste, a native of Illinois, is now in business in New York. Miss Sarah-Margaret Brown is a student at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

Mr. H. Austin Simons, or "Hi Simons," as he prefers to be called, was imprisoned for eighteen months as a conscientious objector at Fort Leavenworth, and since his release has been doing newspaper work in Chicago.

All trace of Mr. Harlow Clarke, except his poems, has disappeared from this office—we shall be grateful for a word from him.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Dreams Out of Darkness, by Jean Starr Untermeyer. B. W. Huebsch.

Explorations, by Robert McAlmon. Egoist Press, London.

Hymen, by H. D. Henry Holt & Co.

Cobblestones, by David Sentner. Alfred A. Knopf.

Poems: Second Series, by J. C. Squire. George H. Doran Co.

The Secret Way, by Zona Gale. Macmillan Co.

A Web of Thoughts, by Marjorie Anderson. Four Seas Co.

With Star and Grass, by Anna Spencer Twitchell. Cornhill Co.

Mystic Songs of Fire and Flame, by K. Arthur-Behenna. Cornhill Co.

Tree-top Mornings, by Ethelwyn Wetherald. Cornhill Co.

Mid Light and Shade, by John Langdon Jones. Duffield & Co.

Anita and Other Poems, by Evarts Scudder. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Eternal Helen, by F. Pearce Sturm. Basil Blackwell.

The Traveller's Tale, by Clifford Bax. Basil Blackwell.

Through a Glass, by Fanny DeGroot Hastings. Priv. ptd., New York.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

- Shadings*, by Bessie Glen Buchanan. Privately printed.
The Birth of the Poinsettia, by Francis A. W. Kendall. Priv. ptd.
Irish and Canadian Poems, by Michael A. Hargadon. Modern Printing Co., Montreal.
Pjesme, by Vladislav S. Pavic. Stamparija J. A. Omero Press, N. Y.
Igdrasil, by Royall Snow. Four Seas Co.
The Playground of the Gods and Other Poems, by Elizabeth Huntingdon. Four Seas Co.
Missouri and Other Verse, by Nathaniel M. Baskett, M. D. Privately printed, Canton, Mo.
Legends of Life and Other Poems, by Bertha Oppenheim. Stratford Co. Mavericks, by William A. Brewer, Jr. Priv. ptd., Berkeley, Cal.

PLAYS:

- Plays of Edmond Rostand*. Translated by Henderson Daingerfield Norman; illustrated by Ivan Glidden. (2 Vols.) Macmillan Co.
Aria Da Capo, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Modern Russian Poetry*, chosen and translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Die neue Welt, eine Anthologie juengster Amerikanischer Lyric, herausgegeben von Claire Goll. S. Fischer, Berlin.
Fir-flower Tablets. Translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough; English versions by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Some Contemporary Poets—1920, by Harold Monro. Leonard Parsons, London.

PROSE:

- The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles*, by Padraic Colum. Illustrations by Willy Pogany. Macmillan Co.
A Hasty Bunch, by Robert McAlmon. Priv. ptd., Dijon, France.
A Mother's First Prayer, by Kathryn Wire Hammond. Abingdon Press, New York.
The Poetic Procession, by J. F. Roxburgh. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
The Beginning of Wisdom, by Stephen Vincent Benét. Henry Holt & Co.
Gray Wolf Stories—Indian Mystery Tales of Coyotes, Animals and Men, by Bernard Sexton. Illus. by Gwenyth Waugh. Macmillan Co.
Browningiana in Baylor University, compiled by Aurelia E. Brooks. Baylor University Press, Waco, Texas.

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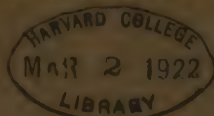
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No. VI

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
March 1922

Medley of Poems

by Carl Sandburg

Monologue from a Mattress

by Louis Untermeyer

Marion Strobel, Ruth Harwood

Morris Bishop

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How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of
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Louis Golding

Vol. XIX

No. VI

POETRY for MARCH, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|----------|
| Medley of Poems <i>Carl Sandburg</i> | 295 |
| Moon-riders I-III—Feather Lights—The Naked Stranger— | |
| Medley—Gypsy Mother | |
| Song Sketches <i>Marion Strobel</i> | 303 |
| We Have a Day—Spring Morning—Tonight—The Silence | |
| Stirs Again—The Night—I Would Pretend—Admonition— | |
| Frightened Face—Daily Prayer—L'Envoi | |
| Working-hour Songs <i>Ruth Harwood</i> | 310 |
| The Shoe Factory—Making Little Clothes—Always and | |
| Always | |
| The Unloved <i>Alison Buchanan</i> | 313 |
| Ecclesiastes—A New Hampshire Boy <i>Morris Bishop</i> | 314 |
| Roads <i>Sarah Unna</i> | 316 |
| Holiday Crowd—Winged Victory <i>Hortense Flexner</i> | 317 |
| Monologue from a Mattress <i>Louis Untermeyer</i> | 318 |
| Newspaper Verse <i>H. M.</i> | 324 |
| Reviews: | |
| Miss Lowell's Legends <i>Dorothy Dudley</i> | 330 |
| Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower <i>W. Bryher</i> | 333 |
| "A Distinguished Young Man" <i>Yvor Winters</i> | 337 |
| A Prize-winner <i>Pearl Anderson</i> | 340 |
| A Lute of One String <i>H. M.</i> | 344 |
| A Poet in Embryo <i>H. M.</i> | 345 |
| Rhetoric Unashamed <i>H. M.</i> | 346 |
| Correspondence: | |
| The Code of Minority <i>Baker Brownell</i> | 347 |
| A New Poetry Society <i>F. P.</i> | 351 |
| Notes and Books Received | 351, 352 |

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX
No. VI

MARCH 1922

MEDLEY OF POEMS

MOON-RIDERS

I

WHAT have I saved out of a morning?
The earliest of the morning came with moon-mist
And the travel of a moon-spilt purple:
Bars, horse-shoes, Texas long-horns,
Linked in night silver,
Linked under leaves in moonlit silver,
Linked in rags and patches
Out of the ice-houses of the morning moon.
Yes, this was the earliest—
Before the cowpunchers on the eastern rims
Began riding into the sun,
Riding the roan mustangs of morning,

[295]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Roping the mavericks after the latest stars.
What have I saved out of a morning?
Was there a child face I saw once
Smiling up a stairway of the morning moon?

II

"It is time for work," said a man in the morning.
He opened the faces of the clocks, saw their works,
Saw the wheels oiled and fitted, running smooth.
"It is time to begin a day's work," he said again,
Watching a bullfinch hop on the rain-worn boards
Of a beaten fence counting its bitter winters.
The clinging feet of the bullfinch and the flash
Of its flying feathers as it flipped away
Took his eyes away from the clocks—his flying eyes.
He walked over, stood in front of the clocks again,
And said, "I'm sorry; I apologize forty ways."

III

The morning paper lay bundled,
Like a spear in a museum,
Across the broken sleeping-room
Of a moon-sheet spider.
The spinning work of the morning spider's feet
Left off where the morning paper's pages lay
In the shine of the web in the summer-dew grass.
The man opened the morning paper: saw the first page,

Carl Sandburg

The back page, the inside pages, the editorials;
Saw the world go by, eating, stealing, fighting;
Saw the headlines, date-lines, funnies, ads,
The marching movies of the workmen going to work, the
workmen striking,
The workmen asking jobs—five million pairs of eyes look
for a boss and say, “Take *me*”;
People eating with too much to eat, people eating with
nothing in sight to eat tomorrow, eating as though
eating belongs where people belong.

“Hustle, you hustlers, while the hustling’s good,”
Said the man, turning the morning paper’s pages,
Turning among headlines, date-lines, funnies, ads.
“Hustlers carrying the banner,” said the man,
Dropping the paper and beginning to hunt the city;
Hunting the alleys, boulevards, back-door by-ways;
Hunting till he found a blind horse dying alone,
Telling the horse, “Two legs or four legs—it’s all the same
with a work plug.”

A hayfield mist of evening saw him
Watching the moon-riders lose the moon
For new shooting-stars. He asked,
“Christ, what have I saved out of a morning?”
He called up a stairway of the morning moon
And he remembered a child face smiling up that same
stairway.

[297]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FEATHER LIGHTS

Macabre and golden the moon opened a slant of light.

A triangle for an oriole to stand and sing, "Take me home."

A layer of thin white gold feathers for a child queen of gypsies.

So the moon opened a slant of light and let it go.

So the lonesome dogs, the fog moon, the pearl mist, came back.

THE NAKED STRANGER

It is five months off.

Knit, stitch, and hemstitch:

Sheets, bags, towels, these are the offerings.

When he is older, or she is a big girl,

There may be flowers or ribbons or money

For birthday offerings. Now, however,

We must remember it is a naked stranger

Coming to us; and the sheath of the arrival

Is so soft we must be ready, and soft too.

Knit, stitch, hemstitch, it is only five months.

.

It would be easy to pick a lucky star for this baby

If a choice of two stars lay before our eyes—

Carl Sandburg

One a pearl-gold star and one pearl-silver—
And the offer of a chance to pick a lucky star.

.

When the high hour comes
Let there be a light flurry of snow,
A little zigzag of white spots
 Against the gray roofs.
The snow-born all understand this as a luck-wish.

MEDLEY

Ignorance came in stones of gold;
The ignorant slept while the hangmen
Hanged the keepers of the lights
Of sweet stars: such were the apothegms,
Offhand offerings of mule-drivers
Eating sandwiches of rye bread,
Salami and onions.

"Too Many Books," we always called him;
A landscape of masterpieces and old favorites
Fished with their titles for his eyes
In the upstairs and downstairs rooms
Of his house. Whenever he passed
The old-time bar-room where Pete Morehouse
Shot the chief of police, where
The sponge squads shot two bootleggers,

[299]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

He always remembered the verse story,
The Face on the Bar-room Floor—
The tramp on a winter night,
Saddened and warmed with whiskey,
Telling of a woman he wanted
And a woman who wanted him,
How whiskey wrecked it all;
Taking a piece of chalk,
Picturing her face on the bar-room floor,
Fixing the lines of her face
While he told the story,
Then gasping and falling with finished heartbeats,
Dead.

And whenever he passed over the bridge at night
And took the look up the river to smaller bridges,
Barge lights, and looming shores,
He always thought of Edgar Allan Poe,
With a load of hootch in him,
Going to a party of respectable people
Who called for a speech,
Who listened to Poe recite the Lord's Prayer,
Correctly, word for word, yet with lush, unmistakable
Intonations, so haunting the dinner-party people
All excused themselves to each other.

Whenever Too Many Books
Passed over the town bridge in the gloaming,

Carl Sandburg

He thought of Poe breaking up that party
Of respectable people. Such was Too Many Books—
We called him that.

GYPSY MOTHER

In a hole-in-a-wall on Halsted Street sits a gypsy woman,
In a garish, gas-lit rendezvous, in a humpback higgling
hole-in-a-wall.

The left hand is a tattler; stars and oaths and alphabets
Commit themselves and tell happenings gone, happenings
to come, pathways of honest people, hypocrites.

"Long pointed fingers mean imagination; a star on the
third finger says a black shadow walks near."

Cross the gypsy's hand with fifty cents, and she takes your
left hand and reads how you shall be happy in love,
or not, and whether you die rich, or not.

Signs outside the hole-in-a-wall say so, misspell the
promises, scrawl the superior gypsy mysteries.

A red shawl on her shoulders falls with a fringe hem to a
green skirt.

Chains of yellow beads sweep from her neck to her tawny
hands.

Fifty springtimes must have kissed her mouth holding a
calabash pipe.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

She pulls slow contemplative puffs of smoke. She is a shape for ghosts of contemplation to sit around and ask why something cheap as happiness is here; and more besides than plain happiness, chapped lips, rough eyes, red shawl, gypsy perfection of offhand insolence.

She is thinking about somebody and something—the same as Whistler's mother sat and thought about somebody and something.

In a hole-in-a-wall on Halsted Street are stars, oaths, alphabets.

Carl Sandburg

SONG SKETCHES

WE HAVE A DAY

We have a day, we have a night
Which have been made for our delight!

Shall we run, and run, and run
Up the path of the rising sun?

Shall we roll down every hill,
Or lie still
Listening while the whispering leaves
Promise what no one believes?

(The hours poise, breathless for flight, and bright.)

Only a night, only a day—
We must not let them get away:

Don a foolish cap and bell,
For all is well and all is well!

Dance through woods a purple-blue!
Dance into
Lanes that are a hidden stem
Beneath the beauty over them.

(The hours lift their shadow-form, are warm.)

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Why do you still stand mute and white?
The day is past, but there is night.

Turn your head, give me your lips—
The darkness slips! The darkness slips.

We could make it hushed and still.
If you will
We could hear, close to the ground
Life—the one authentic sound.

(The hours, as a startled faun, are gone.)

SPRING MORNING

O day—if I could cup my hands and drink of you,
And make this shining wonder be
A part of me!
O day! O day!
You lift and sway your colors on the sky
Till I am crushed with beauty. Why is there
More of reeling sunlit air
Than I can breathe? Why is there sound
In silence? Why is a singing wound
About each hour?
And perfume when there is no flower?
O day! O day! How may I press
Nearer to loveliness?

TONIGHT

A flame
Leaps high
In a wind:
 I am the same.

I go
My head
High. I flame
 Red—blue. Oh,

Tonight
The sky
Will be a
 Cry of light—

Fire!
Come swift
As wind—come,
 Lift me higher!

THE SILENCE STIRS AGAIN

The silence that has lain so long between us
Stirs again:
The rushes bend in shining pathways
To the shining end;
The air is burdened with the rose that is not there—
Always the rose.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I have no laughter now, no tears—
Only the silence grows big with years,
Only the silence has a touch
That hurts overmuch.

The rushes bend
In shining pathways to the shining end;
Bend, and close.

THE NIGHT

The night binds darkness round my eyes
And makes me wise.
The quiet hours beguile—
Like maidens chaste in single file,
Like maidens who have said,
"Be comforted."
The truth of day falls far away
And far away . . .
And all the little gaieties
Are dressed in colors as I please;
And sadness has a gentle hand
I understand.

The night bound darkness round my eyes—
I was made wise.

I WOULD PRETEND

Now that between us there is nothing more
To say, I would have loud and foolish speech
With you, I would pretend I still adore
Your voice: "Come, beautiful, draw near and teach
The way my hands should go in a caress—
Should fingers trail as pink feet of a crane
That skim the water?—or should fingers press
Their weight heavily?" Draw near me again—
What does it matter if the words you say
Are lies, if they be sweet to listen to?
Your lips are quite as cruel, quite as gay
As ever; and your eyes are honest blue. . . .
Oh, be sublimely false (who are not true)—
And I'll pretend I love you . . . as I do!

ADMONITION

Come quietly, without a word—
I am so tired of the things I've heard.
I am so tired of words that tear
At beauty till the branch is bare:

Of words that will not let beauty be
A sweet-clustered mystery.
As a Canterbury bell
Purse your lips, but do not tell.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FRIGHTENED FACE

Child of the frightened face,
Trying to understand
The little bit of love
Under your hand,

Holding the little love
Under fingers that crush
That which is soft as the
Throat of a thrush,

Holding your hand upon
The wonder of the thing,
Crushing out the song that
Wanted to sing:

Child of the frightened face,
Why do your fingers try
To kill the little love?
Soon it would die.

DAILY PRAYER

And at last when I go
Will it be so?
Shall I find you behind
The rude platitude of death?

[308]

Marion Strobel

I kneel within the certainty
That you are near to me:
Each day I pray
That I may follow through
To you.
Each day I pray.

L'ENVOI

The moments reach and touch the hours gently.
Each is kind,
Each is soothing as the tips
Of fingers held to lips.

The moments reach and touch the hours: flowers
Will bloom again,
And I shall pick fresh jonquils for the room;
And I shall pick fresh jonquils in the usual way
Every day.

The moments reach and touch the hours:
Time has no beginning, and no end,
Dear friend.

Marion Strobel

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

WORKING-HOUR SONGS

THE SHOE FACTORY

Song of the knot-tyer

They told me
When I came
That this would be drudgery,
Always the same
Thing over and over
Day after day—
The same swift movement
In the same small way.

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.
Take off,
Cut,
And put
It aside.*

Over and over
In rhythmical beat—
Some say it is drudgery
But to me it is sweet.

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.*

*Out-doors
The sky
Is so blue
And so wide!*

**It's a joyous song
Going steadily on,
Marching in measures
Till the day is gone.**

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.*

*Soon end
Of day
Will bring him
To my side.*

**Oh, I love the measures
Singing so fast,
Speeding happy hours
Till he comes at last!**

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MAKING LITTLE CLOTHES

Grey rain on the window-pane,
And in my heart grey rain—
And the ceaseless whirl of machines
Pounding my weary brain.

*He had such a little share of life,
And now he's gone.
And all my heart went with him,
Yet I go numbly on,
Making little clothes
Just the size of him,
Little clothes for others
But nevermore for him.*

Grey rain on the window-pane,
And in my heart grey rain—
And the endless grind of machines
Beating a dull refrain.

ALWAYS AND ALWAYS

Always and always
I go out from myself
In the silver morning,
Out to greet some new friend,
With my arms laden with friendship gifts
And a hundred little songs of gladness on my lips.

Ruth Harwood

Always and always
I return to myself
In the purple twilight—
Back to the comforting sureness of myself,
To fill my empty arms again with gifts,
To ease the little hurt my heart has brought.

Ruth Harwood

THE UNLOVED

Stephen, son of me,
You will never be born, my dear.
Light of day you will never see,
And the earth-sounds never hear.

But after I have died,
When I come to the courts of the sun—
Though husband-love I have never had,
And lovers never a one—

You will stand with a ripple of joy
On the lips that have never smiled,
And I shall clasp my son at last—
My child, my child!

Alison Buchanan

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ECCLESIASTES

In the smoke-blue cabaret
She sang some comic thing:
I heeded not at all
Till "Sing!" she cried, "Sing!"
So I sang in tune with her
The only song I know:
"The doors shall be shut in the streets,
And the daughters of music brought low."

Her eyes and working lips
Gleamed through the cruddled air—
I tried to sing with her
Her song of devil-may-care.
But in the shouted chorus
My lips would not be stilled:
"The rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea is not filled."

Then one came to my table
Who said, with a laughing glance,
"If that is the way you sing,
Why don't you learn to dance?"
But I said: "With this one song
My heart and lips are cumbered—
"The crooked cannot be made straight,
Nor that which is wanting, numbered."

Morris Bishop

"This song must I sing,
 Whatever else I covet—
Hear the end of my song,
 Hear the beginning of it:
'More bitter than death the woman
 (Beside me still she stands)
Whose heart is snares and nets,
 And whose hands are bands.'"

A NEW HAMPSHIRE BOY

Under Monadnock,
 Fold on fold,
The world's fat kingdoms
 Lie unrolled.

Far in the blue south
 City-smoke, swirled,
Marks the dwellings
 Of the kings of the world.

Old kings and broken,
 Soon to die,
Once you had little,
 As little as I.

Smoke of the city,
 Blow in my eyes—

[315]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Blind me a little,
Make me wise.

Dust of the city,
Blow and gust—
Make me, like all men,
Color of dust.

I stand on Monadnock,
And seem to see
Brown and purple kingdoms
Offered to me.

Morris Bishop

ROADS

You who have made the ancient road of turf,
That my feet might pass over it
Into the level evening—
Make now the ancient road of tears
That my song may pass over it;
Make the ancient road of song
That my ghost may pass over it,
Coming with the new earth.

Sarah Unna

HOLIDAY CROWD

They do not know they wear their wounds so plain,
These covered bodies swathed in cloth and fur.
They do not dream they hold their naked pain
Before this show of life—the checkered stir
Here in the wintry sunlight on the street.
And yet, like martyrs on an old church wall,
They point their wounds—their bleeding hands and feet,
The aching scars, and lips that drank the gall.
For life has hurt them, though they will not cry
“Enough”; shaped flesh to hunger quick or dead,
Withered them, harried, twisted bones awry,
And bleached them white beneath their flying red.
Strange skeletons in merry dominoes,
They do not dream how plain the outline shows.

WINGED VICTORY

Your flimsy dress,
Out of a bargain basement,
Reacts to the wind
As the living draperies
Of the Victory of Samothrace.
Your body also is proudly revealed,
Cleaving the air as hers.
And, verily, you would do as well
Without a head.

Hortense Flexner

[317]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MONOLOGUE FROM A MATTRESS

Heinrich Heine, aetat 56, loquitur:

Can that be you, *La Mouche*? Wait till I lift
This palsied eyelid and make sure. . . . Ah, true.
Come in, dear fly, and pardon my delay
In thus existing; I can promise you
Next time you come you'll find no dying poet!
Without sufficient spleen to see me through,
The joke becomes too tedious a jest.
I am afraid my mind is dull today;
I have that—something—heavier on my chest,
And then, you see, I've been exchanging thoughts
With Doctor Franz. He talked of Kant and Hegel
As though he'd nursed them both through whooping-cough;
And, as he left, he let his finger shake
Too playfully, as though to say, "Now off
With that long face—you've years and years to live."
I think he thinks so. But, for Heaven's sake,
Don't credit it—and never tell Mathilde.
Poor dear, she has enough to bear already . . .
This *was* a month! During my lonely weeks
One person actually climbed the stairs
To seek a cripple. It was Berlioz—
But Berlioz always was original.

Come here, my lotus-flower. It is best
I drop the mask today; the half-cracked shield

Louis Untermeyer

Of mockery calls for younger hands to wield.
Laugh—or I'll hug it closer to my breast!
So . . . I can be as mawkish as I choose
And give my thoughts an airing, let them loose
For one last rambling stroll before—Now look!
Why tears?—you never heard me say “the end”.
Before . . . before I clap them in a book
And so get rid of them once and for all.
This is their holiday—we'll let them run—
Some have escaped already. There goes one . . .
What, I have often mused, did Goethe mean?
So many years ago, at Weimar, Goethe said,
“Heine has all the poet's gifts but love.”
Good God!—but that is all I ever had.
More than enough!—so much of love to give
That no one gave me any in return.
And so I flashed and snapped in my own fires
Until I stood, with nothing left to burn,
A twisted trunk, in chilly isolation.
Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam—you recall?
I was that northern tree and, in the South,
Amalia. . . . So I turned to scornful cries,
Hot iron songs to save the rest of me:
Plunging the brand in my own misery,
Crouching behind my pointed wall of words—
Ramparts I built of moons and loreleys,
Enchanted roses, sphinxes, love-sick birds,
Giants, dead lads who left their graves to dance,

[319]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Fairies and phoenixes and friendly gods— —
A curious frieze, half renaissance, half Greek,
Behind which, in revulsion from romance,
I lay and laughed—and wept—till I was weak.
Words were my shelter, words my one escape,
Words were my weapons against everything.
Was I not once the son of Revolution?—
Give me the lyre, I said, and let me sing
My song of battle: words like flaming stars
Shot down with power to burn the palaces;
Words like bright javelins to fly with fierce
Hate of the oily philistines, and glide
Through all the seven heavens till they pierce
The pious hypocrites who dare to creep
Into the Holy Places. “Then,” I cried,
“I am a fire to rend and roar and leap;
I am all joy and song, all sword and flame!”
H’m—you observe me passionate. I aim
To curb these wild emotions lest they soar
Or drive against my will. (So I have said
These many years—and still they are not tame.)
Scraps of a song keep rumbling in my head . . .
Listen—you never heard me sing before.

*When a false world betrays your trust
And stamps upon your fire,
When what seemed blood is only rust,
Take up the lyre!*

Louis Untermeyer

*How quickly the heroic mood
Responds to its own ringing;
The scornful heart, the angry blood
Leap upward, singing!*

Ah, that was how it used to be. But now,
Du schöner Todesengel, it is odd
How more than calm I am. Franz said he knew
It was religion, and it is, perhaps;
Religion—or morphine—or poultices—God knows.
I sometimes have a sentimental lapse
And long for saviors and a physical God.
When health is all used up, when money goes,
When courage cracks and leaves a shattered will,
Christianity begins. For a sick Jew
It is a very good religion. . . . Still
I fear that I shall die as I have lived,
A long-nosed heathen playing with his scars;
A pagan killed by *Weltschmerz*. . . . I remember,
Once when I stood with Hegel at a window,
I, being full of bubbling youth and coffee,
Spoke in symbolic tropes about the stars.
Something I said about “those high
Abodes of the blest” provoked his temper.
“Abodes? the stars?”—he froze me with a sneer;
“A light eruption on the firmament.”
“But,” cried romantic I, “is there no sphere
Where virtue is rewarded when we die?”

[321]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And Hegel mocked: "A very pleasant whim—
So you demand a bonus since you spent
One lifetime and refrained from poisoning
Your testy grandmother!" . . . How much of him
Remains in me—even when I am caught
In dreams of death and immortality!

To be eternal—what a brilliant thought!
It must have been conceived and coddled first
By some old shopkeeper in Nuremberg,
His slippers warm, his children amply nursed,
Who, with his lighted meerschaum in his hand,
His nightcap on his head, one summer night
Sat drowsing at his door; and mused: "How grand
If all of this could last beyond a doubt—
This placid moon, this plump *gemütlichkeit*;
Pipe, breath and summer never going out—
To vegetate through all eternity. . . ."
But no such everlastingness for me!—
God, if he can, keep me from such a blight.

*Death, it is but the long cool night,
And life's a sad and sultry day.
It darkens; I grow sleepy;
I am weary of the light.*

*Over my bed a strange tree gleams,
And there a nightingale is loud*

Louis Untermeyer

*She sings of love, love only . . .
I hear it, even in dreams.*

My Mouche, the other day as I lay here,
Slightly propped up upon this mattress-grave
In which I've been interred these few eight years,
I saw a dog, a little pampered slave,
Running about and barking. I would have given
Heaven could I have been that dog; to thrive
Like him, so senseless—and so much alive!
And once I called myself a blithe Hellene,
Who am too much in love with life to live.
The shrug is pure Hebraic . . . for what I've been,
A lenient Lord will tax me—and forgive.
Dieu me pardonnera—c'est son métier.
But this is jesting. There are other scandals
You haven't heard. . . . Can it be dusk so soon?—
Or is this deeper darkness . . . ? Is that you,
Mother?—how did you come? And are those candles
There on that tree whose golden arms are filled?—
Or are they birds whose white notes glimmer through
The seven branches now that all is stilled?
What—Friday night again and all my songs
Forgotten? Wait . . . I still can sing—
*Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai Elohenu,
Adonai Echod . . .*

Mouche—Mathilde . . .

Louis Untermeyer

[323]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

NEWSPAPER VERSE

A RECENT editorial in the *Washington Herald* begins with the following paragraph:

Literary editors of newspapers know that some of the best verse brought out in America first sees the light of day in the columns of the press. Morocco binding and hand-drawn initials don't insure excellence, nor have the higher-class magazines any monopoly on truly good poetry.

And corroborative evidence is offered from the *Atlanta Constitution*, which says:

Some of the best poetry written in this country today appears first in the columns of the daily or weekly press. The literary magazines have never had a monopoly of it—and they never will.

In discussing newspaper verse it is hardly fair to include the "weekly press"; for our only purely literary reviews, or reviews largely devoted to current literature—such papers as *The Literary Review* of the New York *Evening Post*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The Freeman*, the *New York Times Magazine*—are weeklies, and as a rule they are much more progressively edited, so far as modern poetry is concerned, than most of the monthlies. *Reedy's Mirror*, for example, under the editorship of a remarkable man, was a much more "literary magazine" in its day than *The Century*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, or any other alleged "higher-class magazine"; and it had more "discoveries" to its credit, in both verse and prose,

than all these New York respectables combined. In fact, the weeklies have been more hospitable to modern poets, to "the new movement," than any of the monthlies except *The Dial*, *The Masses* with its successor *The Liberator*, and the magazines which, like *POETRY*, are the special organs of the art.

Therefore we shall confine our part of the present discussion to newspaper verse, to those "colyumists" and other poets—and poetasters—who have got their start, and won their fame, through broad-cast publication in the daily papers. On this basis let us inquire whether "some of the best verse" is thus introduced.

The best light verse—yes, unquestionably. The wittily rhyming commentator on life and letters, appearing from day to day in *Sharps and Flats*, *A Line o' Type or Two*, *The Conning Tower*, *The Periscope*, and other columns less familiar to this editor, has added to our literature masterpieces in this kind. Eugene Field began it with poems like *The Bibliomaniac's Prayer* and *The Truth about Horace*, each of which started a fashion. Bert Leston Taylor continued it with such incisive satires as *In the Gallery* and *The Kaiser's Farewell to Prince Henry*. And more recent Chicago philosophers are living up to the tradition. Who could show a nimbler wit or a keener critical insight than Keith Preston in many poems now reprinted from *The Periscope* in his new book, *Splinters?*—for example, this one, entitled *Effervescence and Evanescence*:

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

We've found this Scott Fitzgerald chap
A chipper, charming child;
He's taught us how the flappers flap,
And why the whipper-snappers snap,
What makes the women wild.
But now he should make haste to trap
The ducats in his dipper—
The birds that put him on the map
Will shortly all begin to rap
And flop to something flipper.

And if Mr. Preston wields a rapier, listen to the blows of Guy Lee's bludgeon—in honor of that noble animal, the frog, who has to keep his mouth shut in order to breathe. We quote from a *Chicago Tribune* of recent date:

When I hear the politician spouting hot air by the ton,
When I note the silly twaddle of the genus Native Son,
When I'm sentenced to a banquet where a war of words ensues,
When a socialist gets near me and begins to shout his views,
When a bore essays a story that has neither point nor end,
When a highbrow author's ego by his voice starts to extend,
When a woman with a grievance (or without one) launches out
On a marathon of language o'er the conversation route,
I ponder on this habit of mankind to squeak and squawk
In a never-ending serial of talk and talk and talk;
And I figger, as we flounder in the vocalistic bog,
It's a pity human beings are not fashioned like the frog!

Such humor as these things from our newspaper poets is straight American stuff, expressive of our kind of smiling common-sense, our special good-natured chuckle, over the piffle and burble, the mawkishness and pretense which encumber our every-day life. Such wit from the colyum-

Newspaper Verse

ists is a shaft of sunlight on the breakfast-table—it clears the air and gleams on the sharpened edge of the mind.

But what about the more serious verse of the newspaper poets? To be sure, Eugene Field's finest poems—such as *Little Boy Blue* and *Wynken, Blynken and Nod*—first saw the light in his *Sharps and Flats*; Frank Stanton achieved one now and then in Atlanta; and a few slyly delicate poems by Bert Taylor adorned the *Line*. But the successors of these men have been less inclined to favor the unsmiling muse, or she to favor them; and the songsters they admit to their columns are usually about as adventurously lyric as a chirping sparrow. If “some of the best verse first sees the light of day” in these columns of cheer, the present writer has missed it. Yet here may be found, as a rule, the best of the newspaper verse—at least these column sparrows are honest, and their saltily humorous environment keeps them from rot and reek.

But what shall be said of certain other kinds of seriously intended newspaper verse — of the placid rhyming journalese of Walt Mason or the syndicated moralizings of Edgar Guest? The former may be harmless; his endless reeling of facile observations has sometimes a faint trace of savor—the tireless crank is turned by a mild old busybody at least humanely observant. But the stickily sugary Mr. Guest is not only a blight but a menace. His molasses factory proves profitable in more ways than one; so, like other wide-awake business-men, he spreads its products over the land. Syndicated in hundreds of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

newspapers, crowded with platform engagements, this favorite of fortune, journeying to Denver, is met at the station by the whole Colorado legislature, adjourned in his honor and celebrating his greatness with a brass band. And the school-children of many cities are stimulated by his example toward the high rewards, financial and glory-coronal, of poesy.

Let us examine Mr. Guest's style—here is a recent and typical example, entitled *For the New Year*:

This I would like to be—braver and bolder,
Just a bit wiser because I am older,
Just a bit kinder to those I may meet,
Just a bit manlier taking defeat.
This for the New Year my wish and my plea:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit finer,
More of a smiler and less of a whiner;
Just a bit quicker to stretch out my hand
Helping another who's struggling to stand.
This is my prayer for the New Year to be:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit fairer,
Just a bit better and just a bit squarer,
Not quite so ready to censure and blame,
Quicker to help every man in the game.
Not quite so eager men's failings to see—
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit truer,
Less of the wisher and more of the doer;
Broader and bigger, more willing to give,
Living and helping my neighbor to live.
This for the New Year my prayer and my plea:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

What do those Colorado legislators think they find in such sermonizing twaddle as this? Poetry?—if such a fond allusion is possible, how do they define poetry? In what department of their minds do they receive its proud appeal? Wisdom?—if they are honoring a sage, what high truth is he telling them? To what clear heights is he leading their souls? Do they discover beauty in this cheap rattle of foot-rule rhymes, emotion in this sickish slobber of easy virtue? Is it this rhymester or themselves they are stultifying when they offer him public homage, and thereby inform the rising generation that he is their ideal of a great man of letters?

Mr. Guest is not the only one of his kind—alas!—but he is conspicuous and typical. These syndicated rhymers, like the movie-producers, are learning that “it pays to be good,” that one “gets by by giving the people the emotions of virtue, simplicity and goodness, with this program paying at the box-office.” And it pays very well.

B. L. T. hit off the situation a decade or more ago, saying:

Lives of poets oft remind us
Not to wait too long for time,
But, departing, leave behind us
Obvious facts embalmed in rhyme.

Poems that we have to ponder
Turn us prematurely gray;
We are infinitely fonder
Of the simple heartfelt lay.

Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is odious,
Browning's *Ring and Book* a bore.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Bleat, ye bards, in lines melodious,
Bleat that two and two is four!

Today he might have added:

Bleat, ye bards, of home and mother,
Pray to be a regular man.
Treacle mixed with tears is golden—
Pile the shekels while you can.

Let the newspaper poets be true to the muse of laughter.
We need their salt in our daily food, lest the maudlin
adulterations of pseudo-literary profiteers poison our
in'ards!
H. M.

REVIEWS

MISS LOWELL'S LEGENDS

Legends, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Too many legends are getting lost and forgotten. To tell any of them over again and save them from the dust and ashes of the dead is a good thing; but even better to tell them so people will listen. To most of Miss Amy Lowell's *Legends* it is not easy to listen intently—they are too crowded with adjectives, with ornament, with imagery; they are obese with adornment. So they do not cut into you the way even the bare outline of a story may do in some textbook of mythology, or the way voices of a legendary day sometimes still reach you through old men and old women bridging two epochs.

Miss Lowell's Legends

In *Legends* Miss Lowell has sought alliance with Aztec, Cantanese, Indian, and English; but has not, it seems, become one with any of them. Their grief is not her grief, their passion not her passion. At their feasts and funerals she revels more like a tourist in the surprises of intricate ancient rites. She lays no claim, it is true, to accuracy; she has "changed, added, subtracted, jumbled several stories together," she says, "at will to suit her particular vision." But she has not made them over with a vision acute enough to equal the origin of primitive lore. She has not made them with an economy of means that comes of violence.

As a vendor of foreign goods she resorts to selling-talk, with sometimes the taint of a conflicting code of morals or manners upon it. So in the Aztec story of a fox assaulting the moon, the print of a fox's paws on the disc of the moon is labeled as "obscene." She labels these characters, the fox and the moon, instead of making them sheerly exist.

It is a pity, the way this book has of calling things by so many names that they cease to be named at all. One is aware of passing by almost with indifference succinct, polished song and picture which in more spare surroundings might make an instant appeal, a quick thrust. This passage for one:

A stream flowed in a sunwise turn across the prairie, and the name of the stream was Burnt Water, because it tasted dark like smoke. The prairie ran out tongues of raw colors—blue of camass, red of geranium, yellow of parsley—at the young green grass. The prairie

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

flung up its larks on a string of sunshine, it lay like a catching-sheet beneath the black breasts balancing down on a wind, calling, "See it! See it!" in little round voices.

If you consider each legend in the book as a unit of art, it is easy to remember only the two last poems—*Before the Storm* and *Four Sides to a House*. One of these is New England legend; the other, not labeled, seems as real and as native to Miss Lowell. The ghosts of a man and child driving a high yellow chaise and a white horse before wind and rain, unwind, as the wheels whirl, a keen impetuous movie of New England. *Four Sides to a House* is a beautiful ballad—the crying of an old man, murdered, buried in a well. Words, rhymes, stanzas fall into place; the sound is true; the design complete and haunting. Here is one bead of the ballad string quoted for the pleasure of quoting:

Around the house, and around the house,
With a wind that is North, and a wind that is South,
Peter, Peter.

Mud and ooze and a dead man's wrist
Wrenching the shutters apart, like mist
The mud and the ooze and the dead man twist.
They are praying, Peter.

This is a poem with intangible quality. Many of the others disobey the laws of measure and contrast, which are bound up with mysteries, and which rule that shadows will be sure to count against a blaze of light or a blaze of incident, that brilliants come to life across a dark sky, that a dance is figured also by its pauses, and objects by the space they keep around them. *Dorothy Dudley*

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

SPEAR-SHAFT AND CYCLAMEN-FLOWER

Hymen, by H. D. Henry Holt & Co.

It is difficult to write an appreciation or criticism of modern literature because words have altered slowly during the past century and have lost their rightful meaning. Beauty, wisdom, life—these terms have come to represent an indefinite standard of pedantry or the washed-out sentiment of some school-room text. Civilization has rendered the states that these words should express almost impossible of achievement. So there is discontent, a brooding rebellion—no new forceful words and the old ones blurred until the same sentence may evoke for different people entirely separate worlds.

Thus it has been said of H. D.'s earlier poetry that it was perfectly wrought but cold and passionless, and that it was concerned rather with the loveliness of a perished age than with the modern world or everyday emotions. But is it not simply the association of Greek with scholasticism, in the minds of these critics, that has led them astray in their consideration of the poet's work?

Perfectly wrought the poems are: the rhythms swoop in and out of the head as birds perch and flutter in and out of apple-branches. Lines haunt the ears as the sound of rain in the South. The use of some simple but unexpected syllable brings all the fragrance into a mood that the Ionian roses suddenly awaken, after some swift storm. But they are not cold, they are not passionless; and apart from the color of some Attic names how

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

are these songs anything but the expression of the emotions and desires of an extremely present age?

To people born in England H. D.'s work is peculiarly American—American with a southern flavor and a singularly native strength. Call *Simaetha* any American name and nothing is lost but the impersonality of the far-off, silver-grey Greek syllables. Circe is any woman of intellect who, with the very sincerity of her vision, turns lesser minds "each to his own self." The children in *Hymen* are strange in their beauty only because the restrictions of school have not seized them too early nor crushed them into patterns.

It is true that H. D. is concerned with life, which changes little from epoch to epoch, rather than with the exterior impressions of telephones or steel rails. She is very sensitive to the visible world, but it is not particularly Greek; her country is any stretch of sea-coast in Europe or America where there are sand and low pools and surge of heavy rocks. Compare the *Phaedra* and the *Hippolytus* series, which were actually written in Greece, with *Cuckoo Song*, *Thetis*, or *Evadne*. Apart from an added intensity of color—the "lizard-blue" water, the "red sands" of Crete—they are as independent as the poems written further north of any definite landscape.

Could anything be more modern of mood than these few lines from *At Baia*?

I should have thought
In a dream you would have brought

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

Some lovely, perilous thing—
Orchids piled in a great sheath,
As who would say (in a dream),
I send you this
Who left the blue veins
Of your throat unkissed.

The song is too long to quote in full, but it expresses perhaps more perfectly than any other recent poem, the disappointment and yet the sympathy which come when some personality one has admired fails to fulfil both its promise and its task.

It is not easy to be true to any faith in a war-torn world. Perhaps the most difficult test of all is to keep faith in beauty. But there is no sentiment or weakness in the lines which follow—they are stark as a war-chant or as waves against a prow:

But beauty is set apart;
Beauty is cast by the sea,
A barren rock;
Beauty is set about
With wrecks of ships
Upon our coasts; death keeps
The shallows—death waits
Clutching toward us
From the deeps.

Beauty is set apart;
The winds that slash its beach
Swirl the coarse sand
Upward toward the rocks.

Beauty is set apart
From the islands
And from Greece.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Life is a fact to the poet, not a dream. But she has a trick of hiding a difficult thought under a beautiful phrase until the eyes read the song carelessly, and only with the ripening of personal experience is the truth uncovered behind the vivid words. A psychological state that a scientist might take a volume to describe is crystallized into a couple of pages. And she can turn and write songs such as the one which follows, simple as any Elizabethan lyric and without the sixteenth-century mannerisms.

From citron-bower be her bed,
Cut from branch of tree a flower
Fashioned for her maidenhead.

From Lydian apples, sweet of husk,
Cut the width of board and lathe.
Carve the feet from myrtle-wood.

Let the palings of her bed
Be quince and box-wood overlaid
With the scented bark of yew.

That all the wood in blossoming,
May calm her heart and cool her blood
For losing of her maidenhood.

Her psychology is never once at fault. Thetis, proud, beautiful and alone; Simaetha, wrecked by war; Phaedra, smashed by alien forces—it is only their names (perhaps their personal beauty) that differentiate them from the individuals who struggle and suffer in this present world. They are not easily found, but personality is rare in an age of standardized opinions and patented emotions.

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

And perhaps the essential characteristic of these poems is their originality—they are cyclamen flowers caught on the spear-point of an analytical intellect.

Not cold, not passionless, but with emotion and thought perfectly balanced, *Hymen* can make even the “disenchanted days” of which the poet writes, bright with beauty.

W. Bryher

“A DISTINGUISHED YOUNG MAN”

The Living Frieze, by Mark Turbyfill. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

Mark Turbyfill is a young man, but has already been spoken of in print and out, and it is a pleasure to consider his poems as a whole in Mr. Wheeler's excellently made book. One has already heard so much unfortunate talk of Mr. Turbyfill's estheticism, that one is lucky to have a slight acquaintance with his work as it has appeared in the magazines before approaching this book by way of the reviewers. When a reviewer in our generation speaks of a poet as an “esthete” he is generally being sentimental about that poet's sentimentality; and this is a lamentable condition for a good word to reach. As for reviewers, they are largely static.

For Mr. Turbyfill can indeed be sentimental, and that a good part of the time, his sentimentality being greatly patterned after the writings of that other esthete of late consideration, Richard Aldington. But it is not

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

for this reason that he is one of the dozen or so living Americans who have done anything worth remembering. At his best, Mr. Turbyfill is the master of a certain fleeting precision that, like the finest of needles, strikes deep into one's being and is gone before it can be observed.

I am the surprised young man, light walker on night lawns,

he writes; and in a recognition and fuller exploitation of this fact will lie his greatness if he ever achieves it. This one sentence, unfortunately, is embedded in a long discussion of a love-affair which has few merits; and very often Mr. Turbyfill spoils an excellent passage by not knowing where to cut. Had this passage stood alone, it had been one of his finest poems.

Perhaps his weakness is a conscience which drives him to do complete justice to his friends, loves and admirations, wherever they have acted as the original impetus of a poem. He forgets that a poem is a state of perfection at which a poet arrives by whatever means; and that the poem has no responsibility of any sort to ladies or lambrequins. It is a thing that begins somewhere and ends in itself.

In such poems as *Shapes* and *Fertile Gesture* Mr. Turbyfill has remembered, or not needed to remember, this fundamental truth. I quote *Shapes* intact, as an example of the poet at his finest:

Let us deliberately sit into design
With these elephant ears

[338]

"A Distinguished Young Man"

Stretched from the pot
Into green wax consciousness.

Let us exert
Our unused selves
Into other static
Sharpnesses.

In what fleet gestures
Have you found eternity?

His amber-painted torso
A Persian dancer
Has conceived into a leaf-line,
The head inclined.

Other poems that one remembers are *She Walks to Pisa*, *Fragment of Vision*, *Carved Mood*, *Burden of Blue and Gold*, *The Moments Halt a Little While before the Day*, and *End of Summer*. There are lines and passages scattered through other poems, the finest of these being the sentence already quoted, and the third stanza of *The Intangible Symphony*.

To estimate the magnitude of such a poet as Mr. Turbyfill is a difficult if not impossible task. This despite the fact that at least one word of magnitude has been spoken of him in this review. But one can accurately say that his five or six finest poems are perfectly executed, and entirely achieve that which they apparently set out to achieve. And perhaps this is the fullest praise that one can give to any poet.

Yvor Winters

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A PRIZE-WINNER

Heavens and Earth, by Stephen Vincent Benét. Henry Holt & Co.

(This book shared with Carl Sandburg's *Smoke and Steel* the Poetry Society's recent award of five hundred dollars to the best American verse published in 1920.)

Not long ago I heard Robert Frost remark laughingly before an audience that one could practically place a poet as major or minor according to the number of times he used the word *beauty*. By that gauge *Heavens and Earth* is indeed a large order.

The first section of the book is called *Two Visions of Helen*; it begins:

Slowly blanch-handed Dawn, eyes half awake,
Upraised magnificent the silver urn.

The word *morning* appears in italics in the margin to print on the mind a clear and single image. One need not demand of Stephen Benét that he be either Carl Sandburg or J. V. A. Weaver—many of the younger poets are turning away with tired eyes from the verities of modern life. But Victoria is dead—that, at least, has been definitely settled; it is too late to contest it and futile to look back.

The poet continues:

Beautiful monstrous dreams they seemed as they ran,
Trees come alive at the nod of a god grown mute!
Their eyes looked up to the sun like a valiant man;
Their bows clashed shrill on the loins and limbs of the brute!

The second line is quite plainly inserted to meet the exigencies of rhyme; the rest plainly a compromise with rhyme. An ultimate word exists that will do duty for both sense and sound. Is not art the pursuit of that word?

Laughing, rejoicing, white as a naked birch,
Slim as a spear in a torrent of moving towers,
Itys, the prince, ran gay in the storm of their search
Silverly shod on feet that outstripped the Hours!

Heavens and Earth so aptly illustrates the vices of its school that the exposé may as well be thorough now it is begun. Was the *towers* line added only to rhyme with *Hours*, since *white as a naked birch* conveys not only color but form? For me *slim as a spear* is, besides being poor economy, confusing; it leaves me with the blurred image of one who has stared for a long time at the same spot. Nature is admittedly prolix; it is left for that royal combination of gift and reason which determine the poet to model and trim beyond the possibility of confusion. Let the artist's scope be the universe, but let the artist hold the rein. It is admonitory to speculate on what the masters must have held in reserve in prunings alone, for they were all great economists. And who does not know that one thought leads to another?

Stephen Benét has imagination; otherwise—one fails to detect behind his art that significant struggle for the final syllable, the final image. Rather a quick acceptance of what the tempter, tradition, whispers into the ear.

We go on with *The First Vision of Helen* and meet with

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

an interesting line. *He dreamed as a dog dreams, uneasily;* and another, *And how she smoothed her hair back with one hand*, the universal gesture of woman. But *The Visions of Helen* are not successful. What is the reason, if any, for the long symphonic arrangement? One has a right to expect that the form a poet uses justify itself. Many of Mr. Benét's changes of movement differ only in length of line; otherwise, the same overwrought design, the same lameness. Although both the Helen stories have a reasonable amount of inherent interest, one is left with the feeling that they might have been done carefully, in a page apiece, with more point.

Two at the Crossroads dallies with the delicious idea of the meeting of one Palomides and a stranger; Palomides riding furiously, his brain a black pin-wheel. He answers the stranger's inquiry after the sea-road with a maudlin account of his love for Iseult, and rides madly on. Then, the amusing dénouement:

Palomides was far.
And, settling well his harp upon his back,
With something of amusement in his mouth,
Tristram rode southward to the Breton ships.

But Mr. Benét is still without identity. In this instance it is a slightly chastened Tennyson. Many moderns write for the eye alone. H. D., William Carlos Williams, subordinate the oral to the visual, making a form akin in impression to the mural or bas-relief. The concern of the present poet is to grind out grand-

iloquent Victorian harmonies. Fortunately it has been proved, by Carl Sandburg among others, that one may write primarily for the ear and still retain the identity both of the individual and of the age.

Take *Three Days' Ride*, the old theme of elopement and tragic outcome, a story which depends for very existence upon the unique style of the artist and its relevancy to period and locality. Certainly no man who takes pride in his modernity would have begun thus:

We had fled full fast from her father's keep,
And the time had come that we must sleep.

For the rest, it is to be remembered that, as we live in the age of the superlative, hyperbole no longer has force behind it. To exaggerate in the hope of heightening the effect of drama is to frustrate oneself in advance. Simple statement of fact is more impressive.

The Kingdom of the Mad, the last section, a series of sonnets in a less serious humor, is more felicitous. The poet seems not quite so young and chaotic. He detaches himself and begins to speak in order with urbanity.

"Books should be tried by a judge and a jury as though they were crimes, and counsel should be heard on both sides," says Samuel Butler in his *Note Books*. On my side, I am left with the unsatisfactory sense that Stephen Benét's verses are melodramatic accidents of rhythm and rhyme. I look in vain for volition, for image and thought too sacred to have been lightly changed.

Pearl Andelson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A LUTE OF ONE STRING

The Lifted Cup, by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This small book of forty or more very brief poems is a soft-voiced little lute of one string. So restricted a lyric range seems scarcely possible from a woman who has traveled about this varied world; and the emotional experience it records is too narrow to be easily accepted as the whole truth. It is rather an unconscious yielding to a convention—the presentation of a wistful and sensitive feminine type as men and women of richer experience expect to find it. We have it caught to perfection in a number of these poems, for example *The Door*:

There was a door stood long ajar
That one had left for me,
While I went trying other doors
To which I had no key.
And when at last I turned to seek
The refuge and the light,
A gust of wind had shut the door
And left me in the night.

Perhaps the following poem comes nearer escaping the convention than any other in this book—has a brighter bloom. Its first line is its title:

We who give our hearts in spring,
Putting all the old life by,
We shall start with everything
Keen and glad beneath the sky.
We shall know the urge of grass
Parting each detaining clod,

A Lute of One String

Know the one sweet day they pass—
Flowers, the spirit of the sod.

We are caught into the flame
Where the golden fire runs—
All its ardor is the same,
In the flesh and in the suns.

H. M.

A POET IN EMBRYO

Archways of Life, by Mercedes de Acosta. Moffat, Yard & Co.

This book shows a distinct advance over *Moods* in poetic technique, although most of the poems still leave much to be desired. The author has certain gifts of the poet—quick feeling, a degree of imaginative insight, and eagerness to pour out her soul, to express the beauty and strangeness of life, to give herself away. She says what she has to say with a forthright simplicity and directness; and in such poems as *Platitudes* and *Your Face* she says a fine thing, with refreshment in it.

But she is just beginning to learn her trade. She shows a promising capacity to learn it in three or four poems—*Unreality*, *Poor Fools*, *To Vouletti*—in which there is a suggestion of poetic rhythm. Sometimes she uses rhyme—usually the irregular, half-veiled rhymes now so much in vogue; but not yet with quite the air of an adept. Occasionally she should give another thought to such details as grammar: one can stand *will* for *shall*—all of us do that—but not “the maddest of we three.”

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

However, one may forgive much to a book which reveals a fresh and ardent personality. And one may hope that after a few more experimental sheaves the art will respond to the impulse. H. M.

RHETORIC UNASHAMED

Ireland Unfreed: Poems of 1921, by Sir William Watson.
John Lane Co.

Rhetoric here marches unashamed across the cluttered stage of the world's affairs—rhetoric, flaunting exaggerated gestures under its shabby outworn toga, stubbing the toe of its stiff buskin against

rapine masked as order, his vast maw
With Vengeance still uncloyed.

Is it possible that this kind of thing is still masking as poetry?—here begins a sonnet *To the Prime Minister yet again*:

Like your renown-clad namesake, who did slay,
Far across Time and its vast charnels drear,
If only with a legendary spear,
A fabled dragon, you in your midday
Did unto ravening things give battle, and they
Felt your light lance through all their scales!

Now, so we are informed, that spear is “pointed at the captive maiden’s breast”—and so on to the end, reading a bit out-of-date today. May the kind fates deliver Ireland from her friends! H. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CODE OF MINORITY

Everybody is sentimental, even Mr. Yvor Winters. Emily Dickinson, he says, is dowdy; Emerson, sentimental; Whitman, an eventual dull vacuum; Sandburg, plasmodial delirium. I am not used to defending old gods, or new ones; but I can show, I think, that these adjectives indicate a sentimentalism that is not only Mr. Winters' but the characteristic of the larger group of modern noticeable poets. It is not expansive Germanic sentimentality, to be sure; it is protective sentimentality, hard and slender. But it is no less sentimental, for it is based on a conceit, on a vain study of approach and manner. Its mode is not determined by content.

Whether New England hardness, which Mr. Winters reviews in *A Cool Master* in the February POETRY, is really the hardness that Mr. Winters is thinking about is doubtful. Whatever its hardness, the New England idea is primarily earnest—earnest frankly in the content of poetry—as Mr. Winters, to judge from his adjectives, can never be. When he can say cleverly, "This man has the culture to know that, to those to whom philosophy is comprehensible, it is not a matter of first importance; and he knows that these people are not greatly impressed by a ballyhoo statement of the principles of social and spiritual salvation," it is clear that he is not expounding New England hardness, nor anything like it, but the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

assumed hardness of sophisticated Gallic reaction. Poets—Emerson, Whitman, Sandburg—in whom the idea-content has a burning importance, may well seem to him blathering or sentimental, or beside the poetic point. In them the serious idea is not only an intellectual factor but a definitely esthetic component of the poem. Nor does Mr. Winters, in the face of the overwhelming human response to ideas, give any good reason why it should not be. Ideas have beauty.

Whence this solemn authority that the poet may tell only what he sees, not what he thinks? It comes from a protective, contractile impulse. Fear of the world beyond the near perceptions, or failure to appreciate, is its basis. It is "safety first" in poetry. Blunder and bathos threaten the poet who risks being bigger than his sensations, and these too often do overwhelm him; but the naive exposure that he makes in extending himself beyond protective certainties is necessary. He is "sentimental" perhaps, a "preacher," a "philosopher," a "peddler," because he cannot always fuse his own being with that of his subject matter. He opens himself, as Emerson, Whitman and Sandburg unquestionably do, to the sarcasm of the tight, cool, hard poets who take no risks, but he also escapes their inevitable minority. As a productive unit, as an initiative, the poet will never be thus pigeonholed. All that is humane and interesting is poetic. All material waits only the poet with capacity and power to use it.

The Code of Minority

"A pigeon's wing may make as great an image as a man's tragedy," says Mr. Winters. But the profound truth of the sentence is not the theme that Mr. Winters is defending in it. Emerson and Whitman, or for that matter the Vedas, reiterate this truth. It is the most beautiful of man's comprehensions; and, as the identity of all things, is the very being of art and life. But Mr. Winters means nothing of this sort by his pronouncement. That would be to "sentimentalize," to preach, and to enter untastefully into the idea-content of poetry. Mr. Winters means by his sentence that greatness lies not in those things of which the poet has written, "but in the perfect balance, the infallible precision, with which he has stated their cases."

I use Mr. Winters for illustration because he reveals, rather more articulately than is usually considered good taste in his group, the ideational background of probably the larger number of modern poets. Theirs is an ungenerous principle from which there can be no great progress. It is an assumption for the protection of minority. And because these presumed limitations are emotionalized somewhat, I am justified, I think, in calling the hard, cool minorists—the modern French, our American expatriates in England, Mr. Winters, even Wallace Stevens—protectively sentimental. It is the cult of the craft, not of great art.

Let me suggest the code. First: Say little, but say it beautifully. Second: Be delicate; nicety is first. Third:

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Be fragmentary; it indicates detachment; a frail wisp of fact, a plaintive, inarticulate thread of feeling is enough. Fourth: Be cool; sympathies are vulgar. Fifth: Be careful; the limitations of the poetic milieu are fixed. This is the minor code or something like it, the world over. It is not classical, for its restraint has neither the amplitude nor the objectivity of the greater classic school. It is an introspective restraint, the last reserve of a decayed and romantic egoism. It is a hang-over, I think, from ante-bellum France. The indifferentism assumed by these poets is neither spiritual nor spacious; it is the cold chrysalis of individualism from which the butterfly has flown.

Devotion, not detachment, is the foundation of art, and devotion these modern minors have not. They have ignored the artistic value of ideas. They have tatted gracefully in silk, but they have hammered no rhythms in steel. Ideas—even moral ideas, and character, though abused and betrayed in much Victorian poetry, remain primary components of great work. They will remain so, despite Mr. Winters and his perceptualists, simply for the reason that their Platonic as well as their human beauty persists.

At least two major poets are writing today. They are Sandburg and Tagore. Different as they are, every poem of theirs, in its fusion of great and earnest content with personal form, denies Mr. Winters' thesis.

Baker Brownell

A New Poetry Society

A NEW POETRY SOCIETY

It would be difficult to enumerate the various evidences of increasing public interest in poetry, of at least a desire to give the art closer attention and better appreciation than it has had hitherto. The Poetry Lovers of America, a society inaugurated last year in Chicago, is one such evidence. Under the presidency of Mrs. D. Harry Hammer, it has had an auspicious and interesting first season, with five or six meetings at which modern poetry was read, and discussed from various points of view, the history, traditions and technique of the art being considered as well as its modern influences and aims. The club's correspondence indicates wide interest in the subject, and other groups, through the Middle West especially, show a desire to be affiliated with it. The membership, of two hundred or more men and women, includes both professionals and amateurs. F. P.

NOTES

The April number of POETRY will be a Southern Number, the contributors representing the south-eastern section of the country, whose activities in poetry have been encouraged and stimulated during the past year by the Poetry Society of South Carolina, centering in Charleston. In addition to the poems, an editorial by Messrs. Du Bose Heyward and Hervey Allen will present the artistic point of view of the new-old South. These two poets will contribute a group of *Carolina Chansons*—ballads from the romantic history of the region; Miss Beatrice Ravenel, also of Charleston, will be represented, Mrs. Craig Barrow of Savannah, Mr. Marx G. Sabel and Mrs. Frances D. Pinder of Jacksonville, and others.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Mr. Carl Sandburg, of Chicago, will publish his fourth book of poems in May, through Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Mr. Louis Untermeyer, of New York, also needs no introduction. His new book of poems, to be called probably *Roast Leviathan*, will be published in the late spring or autumn.

Hortense Flexner (Mrs. Wyncie King) has recently removed from Louisville to Philadelphia, her husband having accepted a job as cartoonist for the *Public Ledger*.

Mr. Morris Bishop, who is now living in Ithaca, N. Y., has appeared in *POETRY* before. Also Miss Sarah Unna, now resident in New York, who was a member of Mr. Bynner's poetry class at the University of California three years ago.

Miss Marion Strobel, of Chicago, has been for two years associate editor of *POETRY*.

Miss Ruth Harwood, a native of Salt Lake City and now resident in Oakland, California, appears for the first time in *POETRY*. Miss Harwood took a poetry prize at the University of Utah in 1920, and the Emily Cook poetry prize at the University of California in 1921.

Alison Buchanan is a pseudonym.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Sour Grapes, by William Carlos Williams. Four Seas Co.

Verses, by Eulalie Andreas. Privately printed, New York.

The Quiet Courage and Other Songs of the Unafraid, by Everard Jack Appleton. Stewart Kidd Co., Cincinnati.

New Aliars, by Ethel Talbot Scheffauer. Wm. Kupe, Berlin, Germany.

Depths and Shallows, by Sally Bruce Kinsolving. Norman Remington Co., Baltimore.

Shafts of Song, by James Latimer McLane, Jr. Norman Remington Co.

Songs from the Lyric Road, by Ruth Harwood. Privately printed.

The World-hoax and *The Disillusioned Genius*, by C. A. Paul Dachsels. Privately printed, Portland, Ore.

Poems, by Eunice Browning. Privately printed, Sacramento, Cal.

Later Poems, by Bliss Carman. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Poems: New and Old, by Henry Newbolt. E. P. Dutton & Co.

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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XX

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A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XX

April-September, 1922

Edited by
Harriet Monroe



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Poetry

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Three annual prizes will be awarded as usual in November for good work of the year now ending. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the ninth time; to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the eighth time, a prize of one hundred dollars; and to the Friday Club of Chicago, which has donated one hundred dollars for a prize to a young poet.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

The editor records with deep regret the death, on May twenty-ninth, of Mr. William T. Abbott. In spite of his arduous more important duties, Mr. Abbott has most graciously served as a member of *POETRY*'s Administrative Committee ever since the magazine was founded; and the high authority of his name has been, to our guarantors and the public, an assurance of financial soundness. This service will always be remembered with gratitude by the staff of the magazine.

The death, on February sixteenth, of Mr. John S. Miller, the distinguished Chicago lawyer, removed from our immediate presence one of the most loyal friends of the magazine, who had been one of its guarantors from the beginning. The editor remembers vividly and gratefully a witty and discriminating speech which Mr. Miller made at a *POETRY* banquet, showing the depth of his appreciation of the "new movement," and of the magazine's aims and ideals.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME XX

VERSE

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Allen, Hervey:</i> | |
| THE SEA-ISLANDS: | |
| Shadows | 6 |
| Sunshine | 8 |
| Macabre In Macaws | 11 |
| Hag-hollerin' Time | 12 |
| Upstairs Downstairs, Palmetto Town | 13 |
| <i>Auslander, Joseph:</i> | |
| I Have Waited for You Long | 72 |
| Little Lou | 73 |
| <i>Barrow, Elfrida De Renne:</i> | |
| VERSES: | |
| Impressions, Recognition | 19 |
| Twilight, Death | 20 |
| I Wonder | 21 |
| <i>Barry, Iris:</i> | |
| SHADOW SONGS: | |
| Lamentation, Virgin Moon | 312 |
| An Unposted Letter, Nocturne | 313 |
| <i>Bellmann, Henry:</i> | |
| High Trees | 15 |
| <i>Beyers, Meredith:</i> | |
| Bit of Curis, Fat Man | 141 |
| <i>Bogan, Louise:</i> | |
| BEGINNING AND END: | |
| Elders, Resolve | 248 |
| Knowledge | 249 |
| Leave-Taking, To a Dead Lover | 250 |
| <i>Broadus, Kemper Hammond:</i> | |
| ROUGH WAYS: | |
| Burnt Out, Blizzard | 78 |
| <i>Coatsworth, Elisabeth:</i> | |
| COCKLE SHELLS: | |
| The Ship, The Cows | 128 |
| Stream, Broadway | 129 |
| At Versailles | 130 |
| <i>Conkling, Hilda:</i> | |
| SONG NETS: | |
| Snow Morning | 261 |
| What I Said, Little Green Bermuda Poem | 262 |
| When Moonlight Falls, Elsa | 263 |
| Cloudy Pansy, Field-mouse | 264 |
| "I Wondered and Wondered" | 265 |
| <i>Davies, Mary Carolyn:</i> | |
| Portrait of a House | 131 |
| The Last of the Cowboys | 133 |
| <i>Dresbach, Glenn Ward:</i> | |
| In Western Mountains I-III | 76 |
| <i>Fischer, Raymond P.:</i> | |
| A Year I-IV | 84 |
| <i>Galahad, Joseph Andrew:</i> | |
| A Mood | 123 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Gavin, John H.:</i> | |
| Creeds I-II | 80 |
| Immortality | 82 |
| <i>Gilbert, Morris:</i> | |
| Prediction | 200 |
| <i>Golding, Louis:</i> | |
| Full of Laughter | 196 |
| <i>Greenhood, David:</i> | |
| A Psalm for Cathleen Ni Hoolihan | 74 |
| Liberty | 75 |
| <i>Grudin, Louis:</i> | |
| TWO SONNETS: | |
| "All Roads Lead to Rome", Jest | 306 |
| <i>Hammond, Louise S.: (translations from the Chinese)</i> | |
| POEMS FROM THE CHINESE: | |
| An Old Man's Song of Spring (<i>By Seng Dji-Nan</i>) | 252 |
| Seeking the Hermit in Vain (<i>By Gia Dao</i>) | 252 |
| On Being Denied Admittance to a Friend's Garden (<i>By Yeh Shih</i>) | 252 |
| The Sudden Coming of Spring (<i>By Cheng Hao</i>) | 253 |
| Night-time in Spring (<i>By Wang An-Shih</i>) | 254 |
| <i>Henderson, Daniel:</i> | |
| Friendship | 127 |
| <i>Herald, Leon:</i> | |
| A TRIFOLIATE: | |
| Beauty, My Wedding | 314 |
| In Your Eyes | 315 |
| <i>Heyward, Du Bose:</i> | |
| CHARLESTON POEMS: | |
| Dusk | 1 |
| Edgar Allan Poe | 2 |
| Matins | 5 |
| <i>Holden, Raymond:</i> | |
| Night Above the Tree Line | 124 |
| <i>Jones, Louise:</i> | |
| When Love Is Gone | 18 |
| <i>Kinsolving, Sallie Bruce:</i> | |
| Anguish | 307 |
| <i>Kreymborg, Alfred:</i> | |
| Pianissimo | 175 |
| <i>Langbridge, Rosamond:</i> | |
| The White Moth | 194 |
| The Gentle Housewife | 195 |
| <i>Lee, Muna:</i> | |
| THESE ARE BUT WORDS: | |
| The Sonnet | 235 |
| Sonnets I-IX | 236 |
| <i>Mastin, Florence Ripley:</i> | |
| Your Hands, From the Telephone | 247 |
| <i>McClure, John:</i> | |
| Owl-blasted | 135 |
| <i>McCluskey, Katherine Wisner:</i> | |
| SUMMER PHASES: | |
| The Spree, Transit | 254 |
| A Parable | 255 |
| Wholly Happy | 256 |
| <i>McFadden, Athena:</i> | |
| Your Words | 134 |
| <i>McIntyre, Carlyle:</i> | |
| ON THE ROAD: | |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Promenading, The Scissor-grinder | 70 |
| The Visit | 71 |
| <i>Milam, May Thomas:</i> | |
| Two POEMS: | |
| Open a Door, Jenice | 25 |
| <i>Monroe, Harriet:</i> | |
| NOTES OF TRAVEL: | |
| On the Train I-III | 188 |
| At O'Neill's Point | 189 |
| In the Yellowstone, Utah | 191 |
| In High Places | 193 |
| <i>Morton, David:</i> | |
| These Fields at Evening | 125 |
| <i>Nethercot, Arthur H.:</i> | |
| Triad | 316 |
| <i>North, Jessica Nelson:</i> | |
| AT NIGHT: | |
| The Sleeper | 242 |
| First Autumn | 243 |
| Dreams, Suddenly | 244 |
| Bogie | 245 |
| Boatman, To the Man who Loves Twilight | 246 |
| <i>Pinckney, Josephine:</i> | |
| Spring Makes Me Wonder | 21 |
| <i>Pinder, Frances Dickenson:</i> | |
| MARSH SKETCHES: | |
| Sea Marsh | 22 |
| Marsh Pools | 23 |
| Shallows | 24 |
| <i>Ravenel, Beatrice:</i> | |
| TIDEWATER: | |
| Harbor Water | 26 |
| White Azaleas in Magnolia Gardens, Dew | 27 |
| The Only Child | 28 |
| Lill' Angels | 29 |
| <i>Ridge, Lola:</i> | |
| IN RUSSIA: | |
| The Spilling of the Wine | 201 |
| Snow Dance for the Dead | 203 |
| The White Bird | 204 |
| <i>Rivola, Flora Shufelt:</i> | |
| Question | 77 |
| <i>Roberts, Elisabeth Madox:</i> | |
| TALK FROM THE DUST: | |
| The Sky, Numbers | 257 |
| Autumn | 258 |
| The People, A Beautiful Lady | 259 |
| August Night | 260 |
| <i>Roe, Robert J.:</i> | |
| A SAILOR'S NOTE-BOOK: | |
| Typhoon, Sea I-III | 142 |
| Wind I-III | 143 |
| Moon, Cautious, Apparition | 144 |
| Sailor, Barney | 145 |
| Insight, Jock, Stars | 146 |
| Meinself | 147 |
| <i>Rosenthal, A. A.:</i> | |
| Syncaazy | 197 |
| <i>Russmann, Helen C.:</i> | |
| Fantasy | 136 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <i>Ryan, Kathryn White:</i> | |
| Two POEMS: | |
| Moonlight, Convent | 137 |
| <i>Sabel, Marx G.:</i> | |
| Two POEMS: | |
| Recordation | 16 |
| The Core | 17 |
| <i>Sanders, Emmy Veronica:</i> | |
| ANTAGONISMS: | |
| Laughter | 300 |
| Into These Things | 301 |
| Passing | 303 |
| Hill Speech | 304 |
| <i>Sapir, Edward:</i> | |
| A Walking Poem | 317 |
| <i>Schneider, Isidor:</i> | |
| Conversation I-II | 117 |
| The Mist | 121 |
| <i>Sherry, Laura:</i> | |
| RIDGE PEOPLE: | |
| My Country | 293 |
| A Native, Nothin'—Somethin' | 294 |
| Howard Bently | 295 |
| Grand-dad's Bluff | 296 |
| In Mist, Light Magic | 297 |
| Late Autumn in the Hills | 298 |
| The Season | 299 |
| <i>Simpson, William H.:</i> | |
| ALONG OLD TRAILS: | |
| Los Llanos | 59 |
| Hopi Song of the Desert | 60 |
| Yucca Is Yellowing, Bareback | 61 |
| Rain in the Hills, Navajo | 62 |
| Tewa Song | 63 |
| Desert Night, Mañana | 64 |
| Burro Loads, Landscape | 65 |
| Trees, Country Night | 66 |
| Inarticulate, So Little You Are I-II | 67 |
| De Noche, The Trail Up-sky | 68 |
| Campo Santo | 69 |
| <i>Sitwell, Osbert:</i> | |
| Maxixe | 126 |
| <i>Speyer, Leonora:</i> | |
| REFLECTIONS: | |
| Duet | 308 |
| At the Hospital for the Insane, Song Overheard | 309 |
| Kind Fate, The Stronghold, Looking On | 310 |
| A Truth About a Lie, Couplets | 311 |
| <i>Turner, Alva N.:</i> | |
| THREE POEMS: | |
| Old Age, Our Sorrow | 138 |
| Margarette | 139 |
| <i>Welles, Winifred:</i> | |
| Silver Fog | 83 |
| <i>Weston, Mildred:</i> | |
| A Portrait | 79 |
| <i>Wheelock, John Hall:</i> | |
| In the Dark City | 187 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| <i>Wickham, Anna:</i> | |
| King Alfred and the Peasant Woman | 198 |
| A Poet Advises a Change of Clothes | 199 |
| <i>Winters, Yvor:</i> | |
| POEMS: | |
| The Little Deity Alone in the Desert | 318 |
| Late Winter, A Requiem for the Memory of Bees | 318 |
| Chicago Spring | 319 |
| Old Spring, The Silent Days | 320 |
| Lament, Beside an Acequia, for the Wife of Awa-tsireh | 321 |
| "The Fragile Season" | 322 |

PROSE

| | |
|--|---|
| This Southern Number | <i>H. M.</i> 31 |
| Poetry South | <i>Hervey Allen and DuBose Heyward</i> 35 |
| Poe in South Carolina | <i>H. A.</i> 48 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| A Sonneteer | <i>Glenway Wescott</i> 49 |
| <i>Poems</i> , by Stewart Mitchell | |
| A French Victorian | <i>H. M.</i> 51 |
| <i>Plays of Edmond Rostand</i> , tr'd by Henderson Daingerfield Norman | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| Notes from the P. S. A. Annual Dinner | <i>Dorothy Dudley</i> 53 |
| Imports from Africa | <i>C. S.</i> 56 |
| Moving | <i>H. M.</i> 88 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| A Woman with a Hammer | <i>Yvor Winters</i> 93 |
| <i>The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer</i> , by Anna Wickham | |
| Woodwinds | <i>Pearl Anderson</i> 96 |
| <i>We, the Musk Chasers</i> , by Lourelne Aber | |
| Quaker-gray and Rose | <i>Lola Ridge</i> 99 |
| <i>Willow Pollen</i> , by Jeannette Marks | |
| Vicarious Experience | <i>Muna Lee</i> 102 |
| <i>Clouds and Cobblestones</i> , by Hortense Flexner | |
| Jean Cocteau | <i>Rollo H. Myers</i> 103 |
| <i>Poésies—1917-1920</i> , and <i>Carte Blanche</i> , by Jean Cocteau | |
| OUR CONTEMPORARIES: | |
| More New Magazines | 109 |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| From the President of the P. S. A. | <i>Willer Bynner</i> 111 |
| A Word for Mr. Guest | <i>Gamaliel Bradford</i> 114 |
| Prosody | <i>H. M.</i> 148 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| Charlotte Mew | <i>Marion Sirobel</i> 152 |
| <i>Saturday Market</i> , by Charlotte Mew | |
| A Spirit of Quest | <i>Emanuel Carnevali</i> 155 |
| <i>Explorations</i> , by Robert McAlmon | |
| A Promise | <i>Pearl Anderson</i> 157 |
| <i>The Golden Darkness</i> , and <i>In Gossamer Grey</i> , by Oscar Williams | |
| Slight Songs | <i>Muna Lee</i> 160 |
| <i>Songs from the Journey</i> , by Wilton Agnew Barrett | |
| A Japanese Cosmopolite | <i>Jun Fujita</i> 162 |
| <i>Seen and Unseen and Selected Poems</i> , by Yone Noguchi | |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Dante in English Rhyme Henry B. Fuller | 165 |
| <i>The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri</i> , tr'd by Melville Best Anderson | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| A Word from Mr. Untermeyer | 168 |
| Robert Burns Wilson A Kentuckian | 171 |
| Shelley H. M. | 206 |
| A New Pulitzer Prize H. M. | 215 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| Carlos Williams' New Book Yvor Winters | 216 |
| <i>Sour Grapes</i> , by William Carlos Williams | |
| A Sunlit Clearing Pearl Andelson | 220 |
| <i>Dreams Out of Darkness</i> , by Jean Starr Untermeyer | |
| Tarnished Gold Agnes Lee Freer | 223 |
| <i>Paul Verlaine</i> , by Harold Nicolson | |
| Slavic Poetry Isidor Schneider | 228 |
| <i>Modern Russian Poetry</i> , tr'd by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinaky | |
| <i>Anthology of Modern Slavonic Literature, and Modern Czech Poetry</i> , tr'd by P. Selver | |
| <i>An Anthology of Yugoslav Poetry</i> , ed. by Dr. B. S. Stanoyevich | |
| Nature the Source H. M. | 266 |
| On Translating Chinese Poetry—I Eunice Tietjens | 268 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| Mr. Squire Pearl Andelson | 274 |
| <i>Poems: Second Series</i> , by J. C. Squire | |
| Red Wrath H. M. | 276 |
| <i>Bars and Shadows—the Prison Poems</i> of Ralph Chaplin | |
| Calm Waters Marion Strobel | 280 |
| <i>The Blue Ship</i> , by Herbert Jones | |
| From the Nineties to the Present Royall Snow | 282 |
| <i>A Shropshire Lad</i> , by A. E. Housman | |
| <i>Poems New and Old</i> , by Henry Newbolt | |
| <i>Poems, with Fables in Prose</i> , by Herbert Trench | |
| <i>Later Poems</i> , by Bliss Carman | |
| <i>The Collected Poems of James Elroy Flecker</i> | |
| CORRESPONDENCE: | |
| Paris Notes Jean Cotel | 287 |
| Mea Culpa H. M. | 323 |
| On Translating Chinese Poetry—II Eunice Tietjens | 328 |
| REVIEWS: | |
| His Home Town H. M. | 334 |
| <i>Slabs of the Sun-burnt West</i> , by Carl Sandburg | |
| Muriel Stuart Marion Strobel | 338 |
| <i>The Cockpit of Idols</i> , by Muriel Stuart | |
| Tranquil Tunes Marion Strobel | 340 |
| <i>Cross-currents</i> , by Margaret Widdemer | |
| One Poet Speaks for Himself Pearl Andelson | 342 |
| <i>The Maggie's Shadow</i> , by Yvor Winters | |
| Teacher and Critic Nelson Antrim Crawford | 344 |
| <i>On English Poetry</i> , by Robert Graves | |
| Asia Emanuel Carnevali | 346 |
| <i>Early Persian Poetry</i> , by A. J. Williams Jackson | |
| <i>Selections from the Rubaiyat of Hafiz</i> , tr'd by a member of the Persia Society of London | |
| <i>Chips of Jade and Betel Nuts</i> , tr'd. by Arthur Guiterman | |
| <i>The Garden of Bright Waters, and Colored Stars</i> , by E. Powys Mathers | |
| Notes 57, 115, 172, 233, 291, 349 | |
| Books Received 58, 116, 174, 234, 292, 350 | |

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A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XX



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Vol. XX

No. I

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe

April 1922
Southern Number

Charleston Poems

by DuBose Heyward

The Sea-islands

by Hervey Allen

Tidewater

by Beatrice Ravenel

543 Cass Street, Chicago

\$3.00 per Year Single Numbers 25c

How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of
POETRY!
Louis Golding

Vol. XX

No. I

POETRY for APRIL, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Charleston Poems | <i>DuBose Heyward</i> 1 |
| Dusk—Edgar Allan Poe—Matins | |
| The Sea-islands | <i>Hervey Allen</i> 6 |
| Shadows — Sunshine — Macabre in Macaws — Hag-hollerin' | |
| Time — Upstairs Downstairs — Palmetto Town | |
| High Trees | <i>Henry Bellamann</i> 15 |
| Two Poems | <i>Marx G. Sabel</i> 16 |
| Recordition—The Core | |
| When Love is Gone | <i>Louise Jones</i> 18 |
| Verses | <i>Elfrida De Renne Barrow</i> 19 |
| Impressions — Recognition — Twilight — Death — I Wonder | |
| Spring Makes Me Wonder | <i>Josephine Pinckney</i> 21 |
| Marsh Sketches | <i>Frances Dickenson Pinder</i> 22 |
| Sea Marsh — Marsh Pools — Shallows | |
| Two Poems | <i>May Thomas Milam</i> 25 |
| Open a Door — Jenice | |
| Tidewater | <i>Beatrice Ravenel</i> 26 |
| Harbor Water — White Azaleas in Magnolia Gardens — Dew | |
| — The Only Child — Lill' Angels | |
| This Southern Number | <i>H. M.</i> 31 |
| Poetry South | <i>Hervey Allen and DuBose Heyward</i> 35 |
| Poe in South Carolina | <i>H. A.</i> 48 |
| Reviews: | |
| A Sonneteer | <i>Glenway Wescott</i> 49 |
| A French Victorian | <i>H. M.</i> 51 |
| Correspondence: | |
| Notes from the P. S. A. Annual Dinner | <i>Dorothy Dudley</i> 53 |
| Imports from Africa. | <i>C. S.</i> 56 |
| Notes and Books Received | 57, 58 |

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XX
No. I

APRIL 1922

SOUTHERN NUMBER

CHARLESTON POEMS

DUSK

THEY tell me she is beautiful, my city,
That she is colorful and quaint; alone
Among the cities. But I—I who have known
Her tenderness, her courage, and her pity;
Have felt her forces mold me, mind and bone,
Life after life, up from her first beginning—
How can I think of her in wood and stone!
To others she has given of her beauty:
Her gardens, and her dim old faded ways;
Her laughter, and her happy drifting hours;
Glad spendthrift April, squandering her flowers;
The sharp still wonder of her autumn days;

[I]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Her chimes, that shimmer from St. Michael's steeple
Across the deep maturity of June
Like sunlight slanting over open water
Under a high blue listless afternoon.
But when the dusk is deep upon the harbor,
She finds me where her rivers meet and speak,
And while the constellations gem the silence
High overhead, her cheek is on my cheek.
I know her in the thrill behind the dark
When sleep brims all her silent thoroughfares.
She is the glamour in the quiet park
That kindles simple things like grass and trees;
Wistful and wanton as her sea-born airs,
Bringer of dim rich age-old memories.
Out on the gloom-deep water, when the nights
Are choked with fog, and perilous, and blind,
She is the faith that tends the calling lights.
Hers is the stifled voice of harbor bells,
Muffled and broken by the mist and wind.
Hers are the eyes through which I look on life
And find it brave and splendid. And the stir
Of hidden music shaping all my songs,
And these my songs, my all, belong to her.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Once in the starlight
When the tides were low,

[2]

And the surf fell sobbing
To the undertow,
I trod the windless dunes
Alone with Edgar Poe.

Dim and far behind us,
Like a fabled bloom
On the myrtle thickets,
In the swaying gloom
Hung the clustered windows
Of the barrack-room.

Faint on the evening,
Tenuous and far
As the beauty shaken
From a vagrant star,
Throbbled the ache and passion
Of an old guitar.

Life closed behind us
Like a swinging gate,
Leaving us unfettered
And emancipate;
Confidants of Destiny,
Intimates of Fate.

I could only cower
Silent, while the night,
Seething with its planets,
Parted to our sight,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Showing us infinity
In its breadth and height.

But my chosen comrade,
Tossing back his hair
With the old loved gesture,
Raised his face, and there
Shone that agony that those
Loved of God must bear.

Oh, we heard the many things
Silence has to say—
He and I together
As alone we lay
Waiting for the slow sweet
Miracle of day.

When the bugle's silver
Spiralled up the dawn
Dew-clear, night-cool,
And the stars were gone,
I arose exultant,
Like a man new-born.

But my friend and master,
Heavy-limbed and spent,
Turned, as one must turn at last
From the sacrament;
And his eyes were deep with God's
Burning discontent.

MATINS

I saw you pray today
Out in the park—
Poor little storm-driven
Child of the dark.

Body to earth you lay
On the young grass,
Learning the shining way
April may pass.

I saw the clear song
Cardinals make
Brush your face tangibly,
Like wind on the lake.

Then, in the hedge
Where japonicas grew,
A little breeze was born,
Boyish and new.

I saw it find you
And rustle your name;
Lift you, and carry you
Like a slim flame

Out where the trees break,
Leaving wide skies.

Now I see always
The prayer in your eyes.

DuBose Heyward

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE SEA-ISLANDS

SHADOWS

There is deliberateness in all sea-island ways,
Outlandish to our days as stone wheels are.
The islands cannot see the use of life
Which only lives for change;
Their days are flat,
And all things there move slowly.
Even the seasons are conservative—
No sudden flaunting of wild colors in the fall,
Only a gradual fading of the green,
As if the earth turned slowly,
Or looked with one still face upon the sun
As Venus does;
Until the trees, the fields, the marshes,
All turn dun, dull Quaker brown,
And a mild winter settles down,
And mosses are more gray.

All human souls are glasses which reflect
The aspects of the outer world.
See what terrible gods the huge Himalayas bred!—
And the fierce Jewish Jaywah came
From the hot Syrian desert
With his inhibitory decalogue.
The gods of little hills are always tame;
Here God is dull, where all things stay the same.

Hervey Allen

No change on these sea-islands!
The huge piled clouds range
White in the cobalt sky;
The moss hangs,
And the strong tiring sea-winds blow—
While day on glistening day goes by.

The horses plow with hanging heads—
Slow, followed by a black-faced man,
Indifferent to the sun.
The old cotton bushes hang with whitened heads;
And there among the live-oak trees
Peep the small whitewashed cabins,
Painted blue perhaps, with scarlet-turbaned women,
Ample-hipped, with voices soft and warm;
And the lean hounds and chocolate children swarm.

Day after day the ocean pumps
The awful valve-gates of his heart,
Diastole and systole through these estuaries;
The tides flow in long gray weed-streaked lines;
The salt water, like the planet's lifeblood, goes
As if the earth were breathing with long-taken breaths
And we were very near her heart.

No wonder that these faces show a tired dismay,
Looking on burning suns, and scarcely blithe in May.
Spring's coming is too fierce with life,
And summer is too long;

[7]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The stunted pine trees struggle with the sand
Till the eyes sicken with their dwarfing strife.

There are old women here among these island homes,
With dull brown eyes that look at something gray,
And tight silver hair, drawn back in lines,
Like the beach grass that's always blown one way;
With such a melancholy in their faces
I know that they have lived long in these places.
The tides, the hooting owls, the daylight moons,
The leprous lights and shadows of the mosses,
The funereal woodlands of these coasts,
Draped like a hearse,
And memories of an old war's ancient losses,
Dwell in their faces' shadows like gray ghosts.
And worse—
The terror of the black man always near,
The drab level of the rice-fields and the marsh
Lend them a mask of fear.

SUNSHINE

Do you suppose the sun here lavishes his heat
For nothing in these islands by the sea?
No! The great green-mottled melons ripen in the fields,
Bleeding with scarlet juicy pith deliciously;
And the exuberant yams grow golden, thick and sweet;

And white potatoes in grave-rows,
With leaves as rough as cat-tongues,
And pearly onions and cabbages
With white flesh sweet as chicken-meat.

These the black boatmen bring to town
On barges, heaped with severed breasts of leaves,
Driven by *put-put* engines
Down the long canals quavering with song,
With hail and chuckle to the docks along;
Seeing their dark faces down below
Reduplicated in the sunset glow,
While from the shore stretch out the quivering lines
Of the flat palm-like reflected pines
That inland lie like ranges of dark hills in lines.
And so to town—
Weaving odd baskets of sweet grass
Lazily and slow,
To sell in the arcaded market
Where men sold their fathers not so long ago.

For all their poverty,
These patient black men live
A life rich in warm colors of the fields,
Sunshine and hearty foods;
Delighted with the gifts that earth can give,
And old tales of Plateye and Bre'r Rabbit;
While the golden-velvet cornpone browns
Underneath the lid among hot ashes,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Where the groundnuts roast
Round shadowy fires at nights—
With tales of graveyard ghost,
While eery spirituals ring
And organ voices sing,
And sticks knock maddening rhythms on the floor
To shuffling youngsters "cutting" buck-and-wing;
Dogs bark;
And woolly pickaninnies peek about the door.
Sundays, along the moss-draped roads,
The beribboned black folk go to church
By threes and twos, carrying their shoes;
With orange turbans, gingham, rainbow hats.
Then bucks flaunt tiger-lily ties and cobalt suits,
Smoking cob pipes and faintly sweet cheroots.
Wagons with oval wheels and kitchen chairs screech by,
Where Joseph-coated white-teethed maidens sit
Demurely,
While the old mule rolls back the ivory of his eye.
Soon from the whitewashed churches roll away,
Among the live-oak trees,
Rivers of melancholy harmonies,
Full of the sorrows of the centuries
The white man hears, but cannot feel.

But it is always Sunday on sea-islands.
Plantation bells, calling the pickers from the fields,
Are like old temple gongs;

Hervey Allen

And the wind tells monodies among the pines,
Playing upon their strings the ocean's songs.
The ducks fly in long trailing lines;
Geese honk and marsh-hens quank
Among the tidal flats and rushes rank on rank.
On island tufts the heron feeds its viscid young,
And the quick mocker catches
From lips of sons of slaves the eery snatches
And trolls them as no lips have ever sung.

Oh, it is good to be here in the spring,
When water still stays solid in the North,
When the first jasmine rings its golden bells,
And the wild wistaria puts forth;
But most because the sea then changes tone—
Talking a whit less drear,
It gossips in a smoother monotone,
Whispering moon-scandal in the old earth's ear.

MACABRE IN MACAWS

After the hurricane of the late forties,
Peter Polite says, in the live-oak trees
Were weird macabre macaws,
And ash-colored cockatoos blown overseas
From Nassau and the West Indies.
These hopped about like dead men's thoughts

[II]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Amid the draggled Spanish moss,
Preening themselves, all at a loss;
Mewing faint caws,
And shrieking with nostalgia—
With dull screams like a child
Born with neuralgia.
And this seems true to me,
Fitting the landscape's drab grotesquery.

HAG-HOLLERIN' TIME

Black Julius peered out from the galley door;
Behind Jim Island, lying long and dim,
An infra owl-light tinged the twilight sky
As if a bonfire burned for cherubim.
Dark orange flames came leering through the pines;
And then the moon's face, struggling with a sneeze,
Along the flat horizon's level lines
Her nostrils fingered with palmetto trees.

Her platinum wand made water-wrinkles buckle.
Old Julius gave appreciative chuckle—
"It's jes about hag-hollerin' time," he said.
I watched the globous buckeyes in his head
Peer back along the bloody moon-wash dim
To see the fish-tailed water-witches swim.

Hervey Allen

UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

The judge, who lives impeccably upstairs
With dull decorum and its implication,
Has all his servants in to family prayers
And edifies *his* soul with exhortation.
Meanwhile, his blacks live wastefully downstairs;
Not always chaste, they manage to exist
With less decorum than the judge upstairs,
And find withal a something that he missed.

This painful fact a Swede philosopher,
Who tarried for a fortnight in our city,
Remarked one evening at the meal, before
We paralyzed him silent with our pity;
Saying the black man, living with the white,
Had given more than white men could requite.

PALMETTO TOWN

Sea-island winds sweep through Palmetto Town,
Bringing with piny tang the old romance
Of pirates and of smuggling gentlemen;
And tongues as languorous as southern France
Flow down her streets like water-talk at fords;
While through iron gates where pickaninnies sprawl
The sound comes back, in rippled banjo chords,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

From lush magnolia shades where mockers call.
Mornings, the flower-women bring their wares—
Bronze caryatids of a genial race,
Bearing the bloom-heaped baskets on their heads;
Lithe, with their arms akimbo in wide grace,
Their jasmine nodding jestingly at cares.
Turbaned they are, deep-chested, straight and tall,
Banding old English words now seldom heard
But sweet as Provençal.
Dreams peer like prisoners through her harp-like gates
From molten gardens mottled with gray gloom,
Where lichened sundials shadow ancient dates,
And deep piazzas loom.
Fringing her quays are frayed palmetto posts,
Where clipper ships once moored along the ways,
And fanlight doorways, sunstruck with old ghosts,
Sicken with loves of her lost yesterdays.
Often I halt upon some gabled walk,
Thinking I see the ear-ringed picaroons,
Slashed with a sash and Spanish folderols,
Gambling for moidores or for gold doubloons.
But they have gone where night goes after day;
And the old streets are gay with whistled tunes,
Bright with the lilt of scarlet parasols
Carried by honey-voiced young octoroons.

Hervey Allen

HIGH TREES

There is unprisoned day up there:

The even flow of level lights,
The passing of the wilder rains,
The perfect circle of the world—
These, and the longer ride with sun,
The earlier tryst with stars,
The virgin silver of the moon!

It must be well to hear
The broken song of trampled dust,
The long complaint of streets,
Soothed to uncertainty—
Earth's weaving flutter laid aside
Like a folded fan.

See how deeply their lifted breasts
Are stirred!
See how the highest leaf
Fingers a star!

Henry Bellamann

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TWO POEMS

RECORDITION

I have hailed you.
Out of centuries, out of aeons,
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
of time,
I have seen you,
And hailed you.

I have yearned toward you,
Burning.
I have looked into your eyes
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
of time.

Quicker than the shadow of a monoplane
Passing over the shadow of a humming-bird,
Shall we two pass,
And be to all men's memory
Inconceivably remote.

Yet it is recorded
That out of all time,
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
of time,
I have seen you and hailed you.
It is recorded!

THE CORE

I have won free of your body at last;
The fire and ice of it
Can neither burn nor freeze me fast.

I look upon you now no whit
Afraid, for I do not desire:
And yet, what is the benefit?

I still must worship; something higher
Impels me youward constantly.
Yet I am fagot for a fire

The heat of which is of such degree
That I shrivel painlessly therein;
And I am flower for a sea

So cold all things that find it win
To death without the slightest change.
Although I have torn the cabals of sin,

I drift beyond the senses' range
In spiritual perfectness
To lands remote, grotesquely strange,

That thrill my passions now no less
Than even your beauty thrilled before.
But this, this joy, is fathomless;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

More certain, steadfast, deeper, more
Inexorable, and it demands
The core of what we thought the core!

You cannot touch it with your hands,
You cannot see it with your eyes:
Only your soul that understands
May teach you its divinities!

Marx G. Sabel

WHEN LOVE IS GONE

I am as a field of grass
Over which the hot winds pass—
I am bowed.

As an organ left alone—
Organist and songs long gone—
I am dumb.

I am as a goblet dried,
Wine-stained crystal rim and side:
I am drained.

As the ashes dead and gray
When the fire has burned away,
I am cold.

Louise Jones

VERSES

IMPRESSIONS

I feel the sands of time
Crunch beneath my feet—
Out on the open road
Or in the narrow street.

And when my heart is glad
My foot-prints are light,
Tracing faintly the sands
That glitter cool and white.

But when my soul is sad
Heavy sinks my tread—
Deep furrows in the dank
Dark sands where lie the dead.

RECOGNITION

Disguised, a little hope
Came to my door one day,
And begged for food and drink,
And pled to stay.

Frightened, my heart said, "Wait—
He may be born of sin."
But then my soul sang out,
"Come in, come in."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TWILIGHT

The grey-cloaked dusk
Is like a nun;
Her hands folded,
Her prayers done.

In that hushed hour
She seems to wait,
Kneeling beside
The convent gate.

DEATH

Driftwood am I,
And oblivion seems like the sea
That comes creeping, creeping
Nearer to me.

Some day a wave
Will pass all the others by,
And come lapping, lapping
To where I lie.

Then on the tide
I shall be taken out to sea,
Until nothing, nothing
Is left of me.

[20]

Elfrida De Renne Barrow

I WONDER

My heart is a small room,
And life is the light of day
That peeps in through the window
Joyous and gay.

When Time draws down the blind
And leaves me to the night,
Will God come then, I wonder,
And bring me light?

Elfrida De Renne Barrow

SPRING MAKES ME WONDER

Always my love for you
Was an escaping thing,
Like gray smoke seen through half-green boughs;
Or the shadow of gray smoke wavering
On the bare ground of spring.

Why was it never joy—
Clear joy of looking up
Through drifts of porcelain-white plum-blossoms
Into the sky's blue cup?

Josephine Pinckney

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MARSH SKETCHES

SEA MARSH

Like a woman who remembers
Is the marsh—
A woman who forgives, and yet
Whose every mood is dimmed
Because, forgiving,
She cannot ever quite forget.

None knows her secret heart—
One can but guess
What crying winds have stirred
To dumb distress
Her quietness;
What sodden rains have trampled her;
What lust of August suns.
She has no words:
Impassive, inarticulate
Save for the flight of birds—
Slow heron, slumbrous crane—
She keeps her counsel.
Though cities bloom and fade
And forests fall,
She does not change;
The slow years pause . . . pass,
And leave no trace—

Frances Dickenson Pinder

Like snowflakes on a peasant's face.
So long
The seasons have defrauded her,
There is no festival
Upon her calendar;
In spring, no hint of welcoming
For the few flowers
That seek her smile;
No song upon her lips . . .
How should she sing?
For nothing whole is hers,
No perfect gift—
Only the spent and broken things
That drift
In from the unrepentant sea.

MARSH POOLS

And now I know
Where are those stars
That slip like jewels
Between the night's
Most jealous fingers.
At dusk I found them,
Where the marsh had hidden them—
In a silver pocket
Of her grey-green gown!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SHALLOWS

I must swim out—
Overlong have I stayed
Here on the warm shale;
Aimlessly played. . . .
Gathering sea-shells
Empty and frail.

One dwindles here
Where the tides creep—
Grows dazzled,
Gazing too long through the clear
Wave at the sun asleep
On the sands overnear. . . .
What if the thought of the deep
Should become a fear?

I must swim out—
Lest the urge fail,
Darken duskward
And fade, as a sail.

Frances Dickenson Pinder

TWO POEMS

OPEN A DOOR

Open a door suddenly,
And you may see
Loved ones whom you call dead
Happy and free.

Listen—oh, stealthily!—
You'll find it true,
These whom you weep for
Are pitying you.

Close the door softly,
Lest they may learn
They have been spied on,
And never return.

JENICE

If Jenice dies, who is as white
As apple blossoms blanched by night—
If Jenice dies, what shall I care
If there be beauty everywhere?
All beauty will be dead for me—
The silver moonlight on the sea,
The shining glory of the skies,
Will die for me if Jenice dies.

May Thomas Milam

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TIDEWATER

HARBOR WATER

All through the night I can hear the sound of dancers,
Soft-padding hoofs, and the lipping of the water,
The water, the water patting juba . . .

Juba! Juba!
Juba lef' an' juba right,
Juba dance on a moonshine night—
Juba!

Knobbly palmetto posts,
Matted trunks of sea-gods,
Hairier than monkeys, rise from the water—
The pulpy, the oily-burnished water.

Soft rocking feet of the dancers sway about them,
Long-swelling ripples with their crisp inhibitions,
Filed golden streaks like the pointed feet of dancers,
Pull of the tide, and the netted flopping motion
Of the water, the music-woven, oily-damasked water,
Water patting juba. . . .

Juba! Juba!
Juba lef' an' juba right,
Juba dance on a moonshine night—
Juba!

WHITE AZALEAS IN MAGNOLIA GARDENS

Your images in water! Sea-shell gray
And iridescence; like the endless spawn
Of pale sea-jellies on a moonless night—
A milky way that glammers out of sight—
Something of sea and something of the sky.
Drawn from the earth as blossoming dreams are drawn,
Most strange are you in this, that dreams alight and fly,
But you dream on all your translucent day.

Sweeps of divinest nothingness, abyss
Of beauty, you are the stirred, subconscious place
Of flowers, you are the rathe and virgin mood
Of young azaleas.

Where heaped branches brood
Like bathers, water-girdled to the hips,
Like Undines, every blossom turns her face
Groping above the water, with her parted, winged, insati-
able lips,
Each for her soul and its white mysteries.

DEW

The new morning light is a primitive,
A painter of faintly-filled outlines,
A singer of folk-songs.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The dew-flattened vines by my window
Are all of one innocent green.
Nothing so young as that green—
An outline cut by a child
From a soft new blotter.

But when the light grows,
They suck up a pert chiaroscuro—
Gold, meretricious, knowing high-lights,
Hopelessly clever.

Their poems
Dry in the sun.

THE ONLY CHILD

You are not one child only,
Little one, daughter my dear—
Hundreds of shadowy children
Follow you everywhere.

Babies in twilighted corners
Play with your outgrown things;
They whisper forgotten stories,
They dance in gossamer rings.

Hundreds of outgrown children
Look from your candid-eyes;

Butterfly, ceaselessly living
In a swarming of butterflies.

You race through the garden doorway,
And swift, like a silvery band,
The cobweb of children is after you . . .
But the last one holds my hand.

LILL' ANGELS

Mammy rocks the baby
In the wallflower-colored gloom;
All the floor rocks with her,
And the slumber of the room.
Like the broad, unceasing trade-wind,
Like the rivers underground,
Rolls the universal rhythm
And the rich, primeval sound:

*All de lill' angels,
All de baby's angels,
Swingin' on de tree;
Forty-one lill' angel',
Fifty-two lill' angel',
Sixty-fo' lill' angel',
Sebbenty-t'ree. . .*

On the glory of the sundown,
Of the wallflower-colored skies,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I can see her vast Assumption
In a cloud of cherubs' eyes.
With their gold-persimmon haloes
Where the ripest sunlight falls,
And the cherub-tree's espaliered
On the winking crystal walls.

Little yaller angels,

Piccaninny angels,

Chuckle on the tree.

Forty-one lill' angel',

Fifty-two lill' angel',

Sixty-fo' lill' angel',

Se . . . ebbenty-t'ree. . . .

Beatrice Ravenel

COMMENT

THIS SOUTHERN NUMBER

EVER since POETRY began, it has believed in, and tried to encourage, a strongly localized indigenous art. Such art may not produce masterpieces—the gods alone decide that; but no one can deny that the world's most precious masterpieces—such things as Dante, Homer, Rembrandt, or the old Egyptian sculptors have left us—sprang out of intensely local loyalties, and attained to universality because the locale, grandly handled, becomes as wide as the earth; and a great master's neighbors, re-created in his art, will speak, to the end of time, for the whole human race. Today especially art needs to concentrate on the locale against the generalizing, scattering tendencies of the age; else it is in danger of becoming vague and diffused and theoretic, of losing precision and vitality.

So it is consistent that we should offer our readers this Southern Number, and should request two leaders of the Poetry Society of South Carolina to share its editorship with our usual staff. No one can go talking about poetry through the states of our south-eastern coast, as I did a year ago, without feeling that the local loyalties, always dramatically intense in that region, are turning with deep enthusiasm toward the arts. The people are beginning to realize what wonderful material has been

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

awaiting observant eyes and creative minds: romantic episodes of early history and legend, involving three strongly contrasted races; plantation life and city life and sea life, with all their bewildering changes through three centuries of valiant history; a landscape of languorous beauty, melting into the vividly colored tropical ocean along white stretches of sand; and a proud people who have always commanded life a bit cavalierly, contrasted with the sweetly indolent, humorous, more or less loyally subservient African.

All this has waited long for its interpreters, for the South—this particular South especially—held more firmly than any other section of the country to eighteenth-century literary manners and Victorian sentimentalities. Two southern poets escaped the thraldom, of course: Poe by sheer force of genius driven by egoistic will; and Lanier by good taste and a high order of poetic instinct. Both spent most of their lives in the neighborhood of Baltimore, but more tropical sojourn in the Carolinas and Georgia strongly influenced their imaginations.

But Poe was an individualist rather than an interpreter; his high lyric strain was an intensely personal magic—coloratura of surpassing brilliancy and of an exquisite melancholy beauty. It is as southern as Charleston's moss-hung "Magnolia Gardens"; and the refuge it creates is as unreal, as weirdly remote from earth. While one should know that particular South to understand Poe's spiritual sources and sympathies, one sees his proud and

tragic figure slip through like a ghost, haunting but touching not the life around him.

Nor did Lanier attempt the story. His finely observant mind delighted in nature, and he remains essentially a landscape poet; establishing, in such poems as *The Marshes of Glynn*, the rather narrow limitations of his lofty spirit and delicately sensitive talent. A worshipper of beauty was Lanier—a true poet, but hardly a great one.

Much remains to be said for this South in the arts. For a long time its people were scarcely aware of this fact; preoccupied with recovery from a destructive war, they were indifferent to the arts. Now their attitude is becoming expectant; they are at least preparing the way for the poets, painters and other artists who shall speak for them. Local exhibitions are being held, beautiful old houses are being preserved and restored; and poetry societies in various cities are gathering together and encouraging the poets who may yet immortalize their place and hour.

Of these the Poetry Society of South Carolina, thus far the most important, is exerting an influence which may yet be felt throughout the South. It is appropriate that this society should be centralized in Charleston, for, as an observer said recently,

Charleston is the logical centre for this poetical renaissance, because the old culture, which is the only thing capable of bringing forth the new, is stronger there than in any other southern city, not excepting Richmond.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

This society is well organized and intelligently conducted, offering the stimulus of criticism, lectures, local contests and prizes, with the Blindman Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars as an annual invitation to poets far and near.

The groups in Columbia, Savannah and Jacksonville are near neighbors of the Charleston society, and closely affiliated with it. Its example has been felt as far away as the Lone Star State, for the Poetry Society of Texas, with similar aims, is being organized by Mrs. Therese Lindsey, of Houston, and others. Texas indeed has been keenly hospitable to modern poets and the ideas they represent; many of the more prominent ones are familiar figures in Dallas, Austin, Waco, San Antonio and other cities.

The present number attempts to represent the southeastern groups—of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. The poems which we print by Mr. Heyward and Mr. Allen come, with one exception, from their projected book of *Carolina Chansons*, to be published next autumn; which will endeavor to remind their neighbors, and those further north as well, of the heroic history and romantic legendry of this region, much of which will fade from human memory unless the poets make it live.

H. M.

POETRY SOUTH

It is a truism that creative art from its very nature must be original, the peculiarly different and unexpected reaction of the artist to his environment. This is especially true of poetry, the least concrete of the arts; and it is this very quality of unexpectedness in the poet, constituting as it does so much of the charm of poetry, that makes an attempt to forecast the reactions of any group or school of poets a task which calls for the prophetic rather than for the merely constructive critic.

Nevertheless, poets as a rule are so profoundly affected by their environment that by understanding it, if we cannot precisely predict their reactions, we can at least say within limits what they will not write about, and perhaps even be able to forecast the general tendencies of a school or group in its day and place. If, in addition to the physical environment, we have also some grasp of the historical and ethnic background from which poets speak, some comprehension of the immediate social and local problems which surround them—in short, some knowledge of the poets themselves—we shall be able, to a large extent, to tell not only what subjects they will be most likely to select, but also, in a more limited sense, in what mood they will approach their theme; and from mood their style, for it is mood that dictates style.

It is from this standpoint of physical and spiritual environment, from the historical background, and from

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

a survey of the tendencies evident in the verse being written by southern poets today, that this cursory presentation of the condition of poetry in the South is attempted. In so brief a space its statements must be rather general, with all the many exceptions implied.

Despite some vigorous assertions to the contrary, it seems as if southern poetry were going to be decidedly regional in spirit, with a quick human appeal but strongly local in tone—poetry of and about places. Much of American verse is city poetry. It is the similarity of our city life perhaps which has given to a great deal of American verse a note of sameness that is too often mistaken for a universal realistic appeal. The city, too, has given American poetry a tendency to mirror back the drab, and accentuated an almost morbid desire for self-expression which the crowd begets. There has been, to be sure, a gain in thought-content and sophistication, but the spontaneous and simple have been sacrificed, while the constant search for the “new” has brought about a ceaseless experiment with alien forms. It seems probable that poetry written from the South will be, in nearly all these respects, the opposite of what has rather arbitrarily been called “city-verse,” for the South is still predominantly agricultural. Although industrialism, under the spur of northern capital, has ridden in ruthlessly here and there, the plantation of one kind or another is still the economic, vital unit; and it may be expected that when the plantation poet speaks, it will not be from the

necessity of introspectively asserting his existence as an individual apart from the crowd, but of objectively reflecting in simple measures the patriarchal life remnant about him. In this he will very likely be profoundly impressed by his sub-tropical or mountain landscapes, and reflect the spontaneously lyrical and primarily rhythmic melodies of the Negro. Indeed, the effect of the Negro on southern poetry demands a treatment by itself.

It is significant that the syncopation of the Negro, which has found its way into "jazz" music and verse, has seldom been adopted by southern poets. This is partly due to a "subconscious-intellectual" color-line, for strong social and racial prejudices are carried over into art; but to a still greater extent the omission of "jazz" in southern poetry is due to the fact that the short, choppy effects of syncopated rhythms do not lend themselves to the intimate mood of memory and contemplation which the South has to express. Therefore, the more obvious employment of Negro rhythms, and the attempts to gain the ear by poems in unauthentic dialect must not be overestimated. Due credit must be given, however, to the Valentine Museum of Richmond for its publication of authentic Negro dialect-poetry, and its experiments in recording for phonographic reproduction the exact sound of the passing speech of the old Negro. Thomas Nelson Page of Virginia, Harry Stillwell Edwards and Joel Chandler Harris of Georgia, and Janie Screven Hey-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ward of the South Carolina coast country, together with a few others, are deserving of mention for having created literature which correctly records the Negro dialect of their own localities.

The southern muse must be careful how she handles the tar-baby; but the weird, the bizarre and the grotesque in Negro life and story, and the tone of the "spiritual" will have to be reckoned with—indeed, they have already made themselves felt. With the Negro, poetry, music and the dance are still closely associated, as in all primitive races, and in the recognition and perpetuation of this condition lies a great opportunity for American art in the South. It is much to be desired that the southern group may recognize this immense fund of rich material for poetry which Negro music, legends and folk-lore hold in trust, and that the time may rapidly come when there will be Negro poets who can use adequately the artistic values inherent in their own race, and produce something worthy. Unfortunately Paul Lawrence Dunbar stands almost alone; his was a unique contribution to literature, as Tanner's has been to painting.

The Negro, however, is not the only source of folk-lore in the South. Even richer in poetic material is the lofty back-country of the Appalachians. The rush of American civilization has thus far touched only the fringes of this rugged land. Today one may take a trail from one of the mountain towns, and by traveling horseback for fifty miles in from the railroad he will discover for him-

self an eighteenth-century pioneer settlement; provided he is not mistaken for a revenue officer, and his route subjected to an immediate change of destination.

The mountains of the Carolinas and Kentucky were settled in the days of Daniel Boone and earlier by sturdy Scotch-Irish and English pioneers who built their isolated settlements behind the ramparts of rock. There, sequestered from the flow and change of civilization, they have continued to live the life of the pioneer. There are certain remote districts in the Black and Great Smoky ranges where life has remained absolutely static for a century and a half. There it is still possible to hear old English ballads and folk-tales which passed from current use generations ago; and one still encounters Elizabethan words. Certainly nowhere else in the America of today can one find conditions so favorable to the development of genuine folk-expression; with the background of an old, but still remembered civilization, and an absolute isolation which encourages the crystallization, by word of mouth, of the idea into the story.

The mountaineer responds but little to beauty. In his great tumble of hills, which contains forty-six peaks of over six thousand feet, including the highest point east of the Rocky Mountains, amid a flora that is bewildering in its pageantry of color, he is stubborn, vindictive in anger, elemental as a child in his amusements, shrewd, silent, and unerring in his estimate of the "furreners" he may chance to meet. It should be added here, by way

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

of extenuation, that the mountaineer is naturally on the defensive. Living as he does by a code of ethics and morals out of the past, he finds himself contending with the incursions of the present, and he knows instinctively that he is at a disadvantage.

But it is among the mountain women that one finds the pathos and tragedy of these isolated people. Burden-bearers, tillers of the soil, the women are old at thirty. Their faces tell nothing of their thoughts, but there is always a characteristic quality to the speaking voice: the tone is low, soft and drawling, invariably dropping to a lower key at the end of every remark, with an effect of hopelessness and infinite sadness.

The only emotional outlet for the mountaineer is the religious revival, and the occasional neighborhood dance. To both of these forms of entertainment he responds with the greatest gusto, and the extreme revivalist sects, such as the "Holiness" and the "Holy Rollers," have made many profitable excursions into his fastnesses. But such outbursts can not long combat the native reticence of the people, and they soon become self-conscious and indifferent.

In spite of the fact that the southern mountaineer is probably the most interesting and least known figure in our national life, it will be many years before he will write his own story, if ever. The lack of schools, and his rooted indifference to educational advantages, will keep him much as he is, but he should be transcribed through

the medium of some art before he passes; for there is nothing else quite like him on the continent.

The statement has been made earlier that southern poetry may be largely of and about places. If environment is going to affect our southern poets, if they are going to be at all objective, this will necessarily follow, for there is no other portion of the country so districted—i. e., where sections differ so one from the other as in the South. To pass from the country of the mountain-whites to the Carolina Low Country, for example, is to pass from one world to another, one with a different fauna and flora and a different ethnic background. Here the poets may tell of the sea-islands, with tidal lagoons where the wild-fowl, ducks, marsh-hens, and strange gawky heron feed, and the migrating song-birds pass through each year like a recurring flame. They may speak of magnolia and azalea gardens, oriental in a polychromatic spring; of swamps and eerie live-oak forests where the Spanish moss hangs like stalactites in twilit caverns; of the miles of deserted rice-fields where turbaned blacks walk ruined dykes; and of the ancient baronies and manors, each with its legend, where the deer feed around the stately columned houses—shells of a life and an epoch which have passed away.

But if the past does not call the southern poet, the thrusting of industrialism into the Piedmont cotton and tobacco regions, with the rise of the factory system, child-labor, and a burning racial problem, offer a tre-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

mendous theme and a possible chance of legitimate propaganda for the present. Then in Florida, at such towns as Miami, a frontier is being peacefully settled, and dotted with villas Roman in their scale and magnificence; while from the Everglades the firelight of the stone-age Seminole glows in the midnight sky when he holds his secret corn-dances. Southward stretch the coral keys, haunted by huge sea-turtles, that crawl out to hide their eggs where pirates once hid gold; and even today the eagle boat of the whiskey-runner shelters there, making for Nassau or Bimini. Then there are the plains of Texas rich with the dusty-golden dreams of Spanish empire, with enchanted mesas, pueblos, Indian stories and cow-boy songs; or the cane-brakes of Louisiana, and faded Creole New Orleans of the old river days.

How absurd to say the South has nothing but genealogy! Who will sing of them, these cities—of Santa Fe or El Paso, San Antonio or St. Augustine, and of old Charleston with her three hundred years of memories? Who is going to write the epos of Coronado, of the lost Fountain of Youth, of De Soto, of the pirates, of Africa transplanted, of the outlandish voodoo that still lingers, and of the strange new Christ the Negroes worship? Is there no one who will tell over again from the clearer light of a better time how the awful, keen sword of civil war struck down these states, how the slave and freedman passed, and how through bitterness they have come to a saner, sweeter life again? Here is a challenge to the American

renascence. It is ardently to be hoped that the South will continue to reply to it as she has begun to do, and that she will give us largely of her rich landscapes and historical material, and speak of and from the life of her memory and of her present. And it is also to be hoped that the cleverly inane, or the small accidental dream-life of the individual, so seldom worth uttering—tiny loves and smaller hates, and the baldly phrased usual; above all, the banal echo and the purely sentimental—will be left unsaid.

Faked sympathy, and crocodile tears for the past, are the stops which the southern poets must most carefully avoid. Unfortunately, the *vox humana*, pulled out full, is still good for a round of applause almost anywhere, but in the South there is an inherited bias in its favor.

In colonial times no other section of the country was so much affected by the eighteenth-century classical school as the South, particularly the Carolinas and Virginia. New England seems to have preserved and perpetuated, almost down to modern times, the spirit of the Puritan seventeenth-century literature, but in the South your Cavalier gentleman imported his advance leaves of the "latest books published in the United Kingdom," had them specially bound, added his book-mark; and read his Pope, his Johnson, and his Goldsmith, not always his Burke, with complete satisfaction. Education and plantation tutoring were largely in the dead languages; and in South Carolina the old Huguenot French stock read the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

French Bible, Voltaire or Rousseau according to their generation. Nowhere was the effect upon originality of style more blighting. Almost until the civil war the couplet of Pope held full sway—the English romantic movement seems to have had little effect upon it; verse remained an accomplishment of the idle and the polite, extremely sentimental and absolutely eighteenth-century in style. Even today the old idea that there is a distinct poetic jargon persists in the South, and realism in poetry shocks the academic sense, while in files of old newspapers and privately printed books that throng second-hand book-stalls these old voices still tinkle from the dust in their endless couplets. In the aggregate an astonishing amount of such verse was written. Take General Albert Pike's *Hymns to the Gods*, for instance; and William Gilmore Simms, who heads the list with eighteen volumes. How many single poems survive today?

Poe stands out from this crowd of gentlemen poetasters as the great exception. He actually developed his own forms, not turning to new forms but improving on the old. He reflected the life about him; for his poems are much more biographical than is generally suspected, and most of his verse shows strong southern influence in landscape and rhythms. Nevertheless, he also did not escape tradition entirely, and partly for that reason he seems more European now than American, but none the less great for that.

It took the civil war to goad southern poets into an

authentic local utterance, although there were a few years, just before 1861, when it seemed as if the Charleston group—Hayne, Timrod, Simms, and some others—would make that city a southern literary capital. A magazine, *Russell's*, was started there under much the same kind of impulse as the *Atlantic Monthly*; but Sumter was fired on, and the war put a period to all such activity. Both Hayne and Timrod dealt with landscapes and nature, but they are chiefly remembered for their war poems, and because, with a very few others, they were the only voices which to any degree adequately phrased the despair of reconstruction. Timrod once wrote to Hayne: "I can embody it all in a few words—beggary, starvation, death, bitter grief, utter want of hope." It is impossible to judge men writing under such conditions by the ordinary standards of criticism. The wonder that they wrote at all is only transcended by the miracle that they also achieved some memorable lines.

Art, as it is the finest expression of the life of a people, is the last thing to recover from the ravages of war. Reconstruction, with its spiritual and economic despair, put a gag in the mouths of singers; the few voices that did speak were more like croaks than songs. However, one ludicrous little man by the name of Coogler, in Columbia, S. C., conferred five volumes upon a faintly amused world:

Maude—for her gentle name was Maude—
Wore many smiles, and they were sad;
A thousand virtues she possessed,
Many of which I never had.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

This, in its own way, is really great, and the last two lines could have stood truthfully for the relation of the southern poet of that time to his muse; for these were the days when prejudices, and the heritage of war, were too strong to permit of literature being written. Shakespeare himself would have been taboo on account of the Dark Lady of the Sonnets. That Sidney Lanier should have spoken out of this environment is all the more wonderful. He was indeed a protest against his age north and south:

O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The time needs heart—'tis tired of head.

Like Poe he developed his own style and theory of verse, and was not content simply to use the old forms as Hayne and Timrod had done. His knowledge of the two arts of music and verse largely made this possible. Lanier was too modern in one sense for his time, and too conservative for the moderns. He worked against frightful physical and spiritual odds, in the seventies and eighties, and despite it all at times achieved great beauty. He and Poe are, of course, the great names the South has to offer to American poetry. Madison Cawein should not be forgotten. These men overcame literary taboos and traditions, and dared to have personality; with them poetry was not simply polite.

The last few years have brought a new spirit into the South. With the recovery of her economic life has come the possibility of renewing the old culture, and an oppor-

tunity for a leisure not due to apathy and despair. The great war has also stirred and disturbed her subtly and immeasurably, till a vast territory which has for a while lain poetically fallow is now awakening, and from here and there voices, small and inadequate perhaps, but nevertheless earnest and distinctive voices, are giving it utterance.

It is their desire that the rest of the country know and recognize this; for while these voices may utter with a *timbre* peculiarly their own, it is because they are moved, not by a provincial pride, but by the renascence of poetry throughout America; and being so moved by this spirit, they claim to be of it. The South will never express itself in constricted forms; mood, inclination and tradition forbid, nor does it feel the urge completely to slough the old. Here, where the tides of immigration have brought no alien tongues, the grand tradition of English poetry still lingers strongly in an old culture which has survived the wrack of civil war and of reconstruction—a European culture, planted by a strong stock in colonial times; and it is from this tradition and from the descendants of that stock that the southern poetical renascence must come. It will accept with modern spirit the new forms in verse, but accept them as being valuable for their loosening effect upon the old rather than as being all satisfactory in themselves; and it brings to American poetry a little known but tropically rich store of material, an unurbanized beauty, the possibility of legend, folk-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

song, romance, historical narrative, glorious landscape, and an untired mood; in short, a content which will save it from that sure sign of literary inadequacy, a too nice preoccupation with form.

Hervey Allen and DuBose Heyward

POE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

In May, 1828, Poe enlisted in the army under the name of Edgar A. Perry, and was assigned to Battery "H" of the First Artillery at Fort Independence. In October his battery was ordered to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C. Poe spent a whole year on Sullivan's Island. Professor C. Alphonso Smith, the well-known Poe authority, says: "So far as I know, this was the only tropical background that Poe had ever seen." That the susceptible nature of the young poet was vastly impressed by the weirdness and melancholy scenery of the Carolina coast country, there can be little doubt. The dank tarns and funereal woodlands of his landscapes, or at least a strong suggestion of them, may all be found here. The scene of *The Goldbug* is definitely laid on Sullivan's Island; and here are dim family vaults and tracts of country in which the House of Usher might well stand.

Dim vales and shadowy floods
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover,
From the tears that drip all over—

was written while Poe was in the army at Fort Moultrie,

and appeared in his second volume in 1829. There are later echoes:

Around by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky,
The melancholy waters lie.

H. A.

REVIEWS

A SONNETEER

Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield and Co.

The sonnet in our time occupies a lonely and illusory pinnacle. Due to the obsolescence of other imposed verse-patterns, it is mistakenly considered a special province of poetic art, which it is not. It may be an important form only by virtue of its history: it is perhaps the only purely romantic system which has become entirely acclimated; in periods of great fecundity in our literature it has had the cry of fashion; it has attracted profound and celebrated writers. Sequences of sonnets have been substituted for that anomaly of our art, the long lyric, as in Christina Rossetti's *Later Life* and Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, probably the best we have. It is fortunately based on a ten-syllable line peculiarly pleasant in the English tongue. Within it one can experiment, as the Elizabethans did, in complex passions and subtle argument properly dramatic. It may be made the journal of an introspective or passionate life, as in Mr. Blunt's *Proteus* and *Esther* sequences. But

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

its possible rhymes are easily exhaustible in our language, and thereafter reminiscent. Unlike its musical namesake, the sonata, there is no esoteric logic or balance to govern it. Other forms, such as the sestina, may set a pace for more varied music. I suspect its present dismal distinction is due in part to the mere fact of its obsolescence. Modern sonnets are many, and usually mediocre. Each new bundle arouses one's hope: "Here, after all, at last, may be the real thing."

One's hope is not altogether dashed by Stewart Mitchell's book, which contains about two dozen, although he does not invent a new music, or trouble the old un-subtle cadence. The effect, never achieved by this poet, of a truly great sonnet like Donne's *Death Be Not Proud* is produced by the clash of a surging internal movement upon or against the rigid scheme. Among contemporaries Miss Millay will best bear comparison with her masters in this respect. Sonneteers like Mitchell write too much "in the pattern," with a resultant tonal emptiness, or invirility.

His art rather reeks of the intellect. Vision and passion are strained through nets of speculation and sieves of analysis. Nothing actually escapes, or would seem quite to satisfy him. That any trace of ecstasy is hard to identify may be because he makes the mistake of codification inaccurately associated with the *fin de siècle*—with Ernest Dowson, the original work of that subtle translator Arthur Symonds, et al. When human affairs

are generalized into "parched desire," "redolent splendor," "pitiless fates," etc., the odd commonplace holds true that identity, force and conviction go out of them. Modes of thought and address, "preserved" as fruit is preserved, tend to limit the precision of verse as a means of communication. "The conditions of life pre-determined slavery to be easy and freedom hard," says Marianne Moore. One wearies, to the point of fury, of this brand of expressivism:

Bring me, this evening, crimson wine
Such as in twilight seems to keep
Secrets of death in serpentine
Sinuous sleep.

At its best, however, this book is not an arid field for those who prefer the rewards of a discreet cultivated mind to the glare and quaver of more fickle if stronger imaginations.

Glenway Wescott

A FRENCH VICTORIAN

Plays of Edmond Rostand, translated by Henderson Daingerfield Norman. Illustrated by Ivan Glidden. Macmillan Co.

In spite of certain confusions of idiom, this is a rather spirited translation of the most popular French playwright of his day. It rhymes almost as lightly and easily as the original, and has a similar slam-bang movement, and the same flavor and color of swashbuckling, noisy

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

romance. Rostand "put it over" adroitly with the crowd, almost persuaded his audiences that *L'Aiglon* was tragedy and *Cyrano* high comedy; and now that he is dead we have him Englished *in extenso*, and majestically enthroned in an octavo edition, with illustrations of a naive sentimentality worthy of 1850.

But already the tinsel is tarnished, and the loud fame of the dead poet slinks around the corner into the past. These plays, though of French origin, seem as Victorian as *The Princess*—they bear no relation to modern poetic or theatric art.

The translator, in his preface, is at some pains to explain the meaning of *Chantecler*, that subliminal mystery: "Like so much great poetry," he says, "its application is at once local and universal." We refer the faithful to his guidance; if anyone has failed to understand *Chantecler*, now is the time for enlightenment.

"He meant much to the French," remarks one who knows them. Yes, he stressed certain conventions, certain traditions, as dear to the hearts of Frenchmen as the pioneer-cowboy convention, stressed by Service et al., is to our own. That he should further artificialize these conventions was inevitable—a temperament of such romantic ardor must glamourize and melodramatize, must repay not only principal but interest. The public is always grateful for this service—great was Rostand's reward in his day. But the day was short—already it is a quaint yesterday. H. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

NOTES FROM THE P. S. A. ANNUAL DINNER

"Which way to the dinner?" we asked of the doorman at the Hotel Astor.

"Which dinner do you want to go to?" he said, unrolling a long scroll; "the Shoe-lace and Ribbon Manufacturers' banquet, the wedding on the ninth floor . . . ?"

"The Poetry dinner," we told him.

"Central ballroom straight ahead."

Stopped by a jazz band and loud applause, we asked again if that was the Poetry dinner. No, we were told, that was the Flower and Feather Manufacturers' banquet. The Poets' opened with organ music—their music was over. Centre door straight ahead.

Yes, music for a long time was over—through a redundant parade of meats and sauces, and the polite murmur of poets and friends of poets; broken now and then by loud clapping from without, perhaps from the hip flasks of the Flower and Feather Manufacturers of America.

A guest at the table where we sat, an army captain, suddenly wished the dinner might be reported as Rabelais would have done it. We wished so too, though it seemed a petition for the moon. If Rabelaisian eyes and ears were there, what could they do but sleep beneath so decorous a murmur of two hundred and fifty poets and friends of poets, all in standardized evening array?

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Readings and speeches, and more speeches: in which we were told that poetry in the last twenty years had become a practical traditional force in the life of America, that the Poetry Society of America was starting young poets on the right road, creating a more catholic art ("In fact anything now is poetry," one speaker permitted himself to say), was breaking down the standardized patterns, giving the individual a show, making the country safe for poetry, turning out vital, valiant, normal, practical poets; that the poets were too humble; that we live in a glorious age for poets; that they are a force for good against preachers, reformers, business men . . . etc., etc. In the course of which one was glad to meet refreshing honesty in the Nebraskan voice of Edwin Ford Piper, light skill in the humoresques of Wallace Irwin, flame in the rhymes of John V. A. Weaver.

And in the five-hour program there were three numbers in higher relief, moments of waking for any Rabelais present—those of Chang Peng Chun, Amy Lowell, and Carl Sandburg.

Early in the evening Chang Peng Chun brought a stillness into the room, a brief mood of contemplation. He wondered if American poetry today was just "a passing phase of trenchant curiosity, or the poetry of power, poignancy and mist." To the Chinese, he said, poetry meant something "leisurely, unhurried, seriously seeking the depths, enjoying the feeling of pain-happiness." He thought of it as an art that might bring about

Notes from the P. S. A. Annual Dinner

in this country a new way of judging values—according to human satisfaction and not material gain; it might correct the evils of mechanization. He ended on an evidently bitter note—a hope that “China might be made a paradise for China, and not for pirates and profiteers.” He gave these as classic definitions:

Poetry is like the sound of the rhythm in the void; is like the color in phenomena; is like the moon in the water; the image in the mirror. There is an end in words, but the meaning will waft on forever.

Two hours more of speakers, and Miss Lowell rose, and curdled some of the guests by the acid of her anathema against the trend of the evening. With the one Chinese exception, she damned it as a kind of benefit performance, “a phonograph repeating encores.” She called for “the sharp clash of critical emotional insight;” but in vain that evening.

At length at midnight Carl Sandburg did what seemed beyond doing—brought a maimed and dying audience to life again by magnets of the art which after all they must have come for. The room at last began to take on an air of enjoyment, extending even to the two surviving head-waiters in the wings. The definitions he submitted stood beside those fished from Chinese lore: poetry—“a mystic sensuous mathematics of fire, smoke-stacks, waffles, pansies, people, and purple sunsets; a kinetic arrangement of static syllables; the capture of a picture, a song or a flair in a deliberate prism of words.” The mathematics of a long deliberate supple poem, *The*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Windy City, held his audience through its number of changing themes—a far blend, annealed in music, of movement, color, noise, mood, shape and fact; likely to baffle critics who label this poet as either “lyrical” or “rugged.” Three songs to a guitar—one of them *Jay Gould's Daughter*, an ironic railroad caprice—perhaps lightened the intensity of this number, and perhaps deepened it.

An hour of values contemplative and exciting, to four hours of futility! An unfair ratio, it seemed to some of us.

Dorothy Dudley

IMPORTS FROM AFRICA

To the Editor: Speaking of your Southern Number, have you seen the *Imports from Africa* contributed recently to *The Reviewer*, of Richmond, Va., by Mrs. Julia M. Peterkin, who lives on an old plantation near Fort Motte, S. C.? Here is one of these Negro carvings—it's called *The Plat-eye*:

Ef you trabble roun' at night, 'specially in de spring, endurin' de small o' de moon, you mor'n likely to see a plat-eye. Long up yonder by Gilliken's sto' at de ben' o' de road close by de two notch mile pos', a lil dog'll come a runnin' up by you an' kinder rub hisse'f up on you leg. You shoot at em, an' it'll tu'n to a hawg. You shoot 'em agin an' it'll tu'n to a hoss. Shoot em agin, an' it'll tu'n to a man 'thout no head. But you keep on ashootin' an' it'll tu'n to a fog, jus' somep'n nother kinder like a cloud. Den you run. A cowardly man don't tote no break bones.

Imports from Africa

The Negroes on Lang Syne Plantation are in straight descent from the first arrivals. Mrs. Peterkin is listening in on some rich folk-lore. C. S.

NOTES

The May number of POETRY will be issued from a different address, 232 East Erie Street. Our new office will be a few blocks north-east of the present one; being across North Michigan Avenue, and a quarter of a mile nearer Lake Michigan.

We hope that our friends, new and old, will find us no less accessible and hospitable than we have endeavored to be in the abode which has sheltered us since POETRY began. "Five-forty-three Cass Street" has become an important part of our history, and we hope that the bright south room in Erie Street will welcome as many guests and gather as many memories.

.....

Mr. DuBose Heyward, of Charleston, who is secretary and one of the founders of the Poetry Society of South Carolina, has been a contributor to POETRY and other magazines. Together with Mr. Hervey Allen, he will publish next autumn a book of local ballads and descriptive pieces, *Carolina Chansons*.

Beatrice Ravenel (Mrs. Francis G.), of Charleston, S. C., is a well-known contributor to this magazine and others; a writer of stories as well as verse.

Mr. Marx G. Sabel, of Jacksonville, Fla., also requires no introduction to our readers. Nor does Miss Josephine Pinckney of Charleston, or Mr. Henry Bellamann, of Columbia, S. C., author of *A Music-teacher's Note-Book* (N. Y. Poetry Book-shop).

The other contributors appear for the first time in this magazine: Mr. Hervey Allen, of Charleston, is the author of *Wampum and Old Gold*, recently published by the Yale University Press in the *Yale Series of Younger Poets*.

Mrs. Frances Dickenson Pinder, a member, like Mr. Sabel, of the Round Table group at Jacksonville, Fla., has contributed verse and prose to various magazines.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

May Thomas Milam (Mrs. J. C.), of Atlanta, Ga., has also contributed to the magazines.

Elfrida De Renne Barrow (Mrs. Craig B.), a member of the Prosodists group in Savannah, Ga., has published little as yet. Ditto Miss Louise Jones, who was last year a student at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Collected Poems of James Ekroy Flecker. Edited, with an introduction, by J. C. Squire. Alfred A. Knopf.

Epitaphs, by Lady Margaret Sackville. William Brown, Edinburgh.

The Rainbow's Foot, by Julius W. Muller. Priv. pr't'd, New York.

Vagrants, by Georgia E. Bennett. Ralph Fletcher Seymour.

The Land of Beginning Again, by Louisa Fletcher. Small, Maynard & Co.

The Blue-Dragon Ballads, by Alfred James Fritchey. Privately printed, Los Angeles.

Veils of Samite, by J. Corson Miller. Small, Maynard & Co.

The Maggie's Shadow, by Yvor Winters. Musterbook II. Muster-bookhouse, Chicago.

MASQUES:

The Land of the Aiuwas, by Edwin Ford Piper. Midland Press, Iowa City, Ia.

The Masque of Morning and Other Poems, by Edward Viets. Four Seas Co.

ANTHOLOGIES:

Modern Verse, British and American, edited by Anita P. Forbes. Henry Holt & Co.

Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1921, edited by William Stanley Braithwaite. Small, Maynard & Co.

A Little Book of Verse, Peabody High School. Press of Thomas Siviter & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

TRANSLATIONS:

The Kobzar of the Ukraine, by Taras Shevchenko. Done in English Verse by Alex. Jardine Hunter. Priv. pr'td, Teulon, Man., Canada.

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VALENTINE DAY, EASTER, MOTHER'S
DAY ETC. ¶ EACH VERSE MUST
BE BRIEF - NOT MORE THAN SIX
OR EIGHT LINES •• AND MUST
CONTAIN A DEFINITE MESSAGE ¶
NO GENERALITIES, HOWEVER
GLAMOROUS OR GLITTERING..
¶ HEADS IN THE CLOUDS IF YOU
WISH, BUT FEET ON THE EARTH
AT ALL TIMES.. ¶ BE SIMPLE
HUMAN, IMAGINATIVE AND
APPEALING. ¶ PROMPT CONSID-
ERATION AND REMUNERATION.

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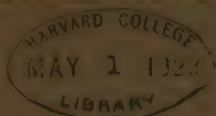
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Vol. XX

No. II

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe

May 1922

Along Old Trails

by William H. Simpson

Silver Fog, by Winifred Welles

A Year, by Raymond Fischer

Carlyle McIntyre

David Greenhood

232 East Erie Street, Chicago

\$3.00 per Year Single Numbers 25c

How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of
POETRY!
Louis Golding

Vol. XX

No. II

POETRY for MAY, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|----------|
| Along Old Trails <i>William H. Simpson</i> | 59 |
| Los Llanos—Hopi Song of the Desert—Yucca is Yellowing— Bareback—Rain in the Hills—Navajo—Tewa Song—Desert Night—Mañana—Burro Loads—Landscape—Trees—Country Night—Inarticulate—So Little You Are I-II—De Noche— The Trail Up-sky—Campo Santo | |
| On the Road <i>Carlyle McIntyre</i> | 70 |
| Promenading—The Scissor-grinder—The Visit | |
| Two Poems <i>Joseph Auslander</i> | 72 |
| I Have Waited for You Long—Little Lou | |
| A Psalm for Cathleen Ni Hoolihan—Liberty <i>David Greenhood</i> | 74 |
| In Western Mountains I-III <i>Glenn Ward Dresbach</i> | 76 |
| Question <i>Flora Shufelt Rivola</i> | 77 |
| Rough Ways <i>Kemper Hammond Broadus</i> | 78 |
| Burnt Out—Blizzard | |
| A Portrait <i>Mildred Weston</i> | 79 |
| Creeds I-II—Immortality <i>John H. Gavin</i> | 80 |
| Silver Fog <i>Winifred Welles</i> | 83 |
| A Year I-IV <i>Raymond P. Fischer</i> | 84 |
| Moving <i>H. M.</i> | 88 |
| Reviews: | |
| A Woman with a Hammer <i>Yvor Winters</i> | 93 |
| Woodwinds <i>Pearl Andelson</i> | 96 |
| Quaker-gray and Rose <i>Lola Ridge</i> | 99 |
| Vicarious Experience <i>Muna Lee</i> | 102 |
| Jean Cocteau <i>Rollo H. Myers</i> | 103 |
| Our Contemporaries: | |
| More New Magazines | 109 |
| Correspondence: | |
| From the President of the P. S. A. <i>Witter Bynner</i> | 111 |
| A Word for Mr. Guest <i>Gamaliel Bradford</i> | 114 |
| Notes and Books Received | 115, 116 |

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Doetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XX
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MAY 1922

ALONG OLD TRAILS

LOS LLANOS

A GAIN, O plains,
I go your windswept ways,
With Indian, trapper, trader, pioneer—
Gray shadows all
On gray grass.

I am companioned—
Miracle most strange—
By youth
And its high dreams.

West, with the sun,
From rim to rim;
And then,
Beyond ken,

[59]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Tired miles of trails
On sod fresh trod.

So new
The billows of your grass—
So new
Your breezes, born each morn.

But old—so old—
The ghosts that pass.

HOPI SONG OF THE DESERT

You are so beautiful!—
Like the face of Ta-wa-wis-ni-mi.

I cannot speak the words
To tell of your too-much beauty—
You, the desert;
You, the going down of the sun;
You, my beloved.

If I could hold you,
If I could touch you!—
But you flee from me,
As runs the deer.

You are so beautiful!
If only my song
Could tell of your beauty!

[60]

William H. Simpson

YUCCA IS YELLOWING

Yucca is yellowing—
Hello, yellow!
Cactus is crimsoning—
Glow, glow, red fellow!
And in the mesquite bush is seen
A splash of green:

As when sunset colors spill
Their beauty down an evening hill.

No one rides the trail today—
Who cares if strange or lonely?
No one goes the desert way—
It is for beauty only.

BAREBACK

The winds ride bareback,
Swinging lassos.

Their reins hang loose,
Their knees cling tight.

The trees bend down . . .
Behind, rides the rain.

[61]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

RAIN IN THE HILLS

Were I the rain
Coming over the hills—

I should be glad
That my cool fingers could ease the little fevers of dusty
water-holes,
And caress curled leaves of the cottonwoods.

The herd,
Pawing, bellowing, would let me quiet them,
Standing in fresh pools by dusty water-holes—

If I were the rain
Coming over the hills.

NAVAJO

Your desert land is—
An old squaw,
Mumbling old words
Beside dead embers of old thoughts.

What she has told you
Is not told to me,
Though I ask.

Your desert land is—
Coyote,

William H. Simpson

Running alongside white horses
As the wolves howl.

What it has found out, running,
Is not told to me,
Though I ask.

TEWA SONG

Above the lands,
Above the seas,
You see, you know,
All mysteries—
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

Would I could fly
On widespread wing
Where whirlpools are
And flame-tips sing—
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

Die in the sea,
And rise at morn;
Thus would I go,
And thus be born—
 Sun Old Man,
 Moon Old Man!

[63]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

DESERT NIGHT

June moon of the desert,
Sailing low—
The ways are free
Where God's fleets go.

The palo verde
You silver-tip;
The mesquite leaves
With your ghost-glow drip.

Deep down in furrows
Of wind-plowed hills
You shine, and their glory
Overspills.

MAÑANA

Sí, sí, señor,
Should one ask, what for
This slumbering
When day is on the wing—

There is roof overhead;
On the table, bread;
On the vine,
Grapes for new wine;
Burros two;
And, *querida mia*, you.

William H. Simpson

Tomorrow—
Why trouble borrow?

BURRO LOADS

What do you carry, O burros gray,
Heaped high with loads, at break of day?

Pinyon for fires, when days are cold,
And old men shiver, so cold, so old.

Pinyon for fires, when coals are red,
And brown-skinned bodies are blanketed.

Pinyon for fires—like a crimson rose,
Flaming, in camps by the early snows.

Paisano, nifia, or señor bold—
Light for their souls, as bells are tolled.

LANDSCAPE

Quiet of November waters,
White in the twilight—
A narrow rippled ribbon, thrown carelessly by anybody,
across faded fields. . . .

Troubled March waters,
Black in the noonshine—
In curves, pushing against the late snows, tumbling them
in.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TREES

You root deep,
And reach skyward.

Something you say to me
That is under the earth.
Something you say to me
That is over the earth.

What it is,
Perhaps the closed eyes know.
What it is,
Maybe the folded wings know.

COUNTRY NIGHT

Night, you have soft fur,
And it is black;
I hear you purr, purr.
Night, you fly to my door,
A tired raven
From the world quarters four.

(Is your nest in the hedge
By the road,
Or on the moon's edge?)

Night, you are a sleepy girl—
Arms around my neck,
Your dark hair in a whirl.

William H. Simpson

INARTICULATE

O dumbness of tree
And of sod—
You can say so little to me,
So much to God!

SO LITTLE YOU ARE

I

O Earth!
So little you are
In the whirl of all worlds,
Through the long cold
And the long night.
I marvel
That the tips of the sun-flames
Find you
Across wide ways of the dark.
Or is it
That life
May come from its hiding?

II

O loved one,
So little you are
In the swirl of all souls,
Through the long days,
Through the long years!

[67]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I wonder
That the flames of my longing
Find you
Across wide ways of desire.

Or is it
That life
May come from its hiding?

DE NOCHE

O mother of all the dark!
Draw near, on tiptoe,
Blindfold me, and say:
Go to sleep—to sleep—to sleep.
If only the hills of the night would stay in their steadfast
places—
Bulging bulk of the hulk of the range.
They creep, like a she-panther, to where I rest in the
valley;
They come, down-tumbling, to where I lie on the pine
boughs. . . .
The river runs away.
The aspens, by the runaway river, are afraid.

THE TRAIL UP-SKY

Too soon
Fades that last whiteness of the moon.

William H. Simpson

The face of noon is wrinkled, old—
Like Pablo's, of the sheepfold,
Who has seen all youth go by
On the long trail, up-sky.

Evening waits
At her turquoise gates
To fondle us,
And sing and sing,
With croon of mothering.

We ask not whither,
Ask not why,
On the long trail up-sky.

CAMPO SANTO

Inés, Anita, Tomás, José,
I sup with you, on my pilgrim way;

Craving the stillness of 'dobe walls,
And earth-floors trod by soft footfalls.

Yon campo santo is earthen, too;
Room in it for me, and room for you;

Little earth homes, for the weary—all
Who seek their sleep by the earthy wall.

William H. Simpson

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ON THE ROAD

PROMENADING

As I went down to Baldwin's Pond,
The mud-hens dove from sight,
And then like corks bobbed bravely up
And paddled with delight.

Oh, green-blade rushes fringed the pool,
Eye-lashes delicate;
The waters were as calm as though
A seer should gaze on fate.

And reed-birds, piping holy notes,
Inspired me with such faith
That I walked on the shining pond
As though I were a wraith.

Yes, hand in hand with whitest flowers,
My heart beat mad and high—
I went a-walking (it was spring)
With lilies on the sky.

THE SCISSOR-GRINDER

The scissor-man tramped into town. Ding-a-dong!
ding-a-dong!
He set his little grindstone down, and to its music hummed
a song.

Carlyle McIntyre

Old Grandma Dumpkins' scissor-shears, he edged their
blades so finely
That she cut off her children's ears and made them sing
divinely.

And Gaffer Smither's pruning-hook he whetted to such
keenness
That Gaffer trimmed the town, and took the shade away
for meanness.

But furthermore, the butcher's knife he rounded off so
dully,
That cattle now enjoy their life and fill the milkpails fully.

Then—ding-a-dong! ding-a-dong! I saw his red hat top
the hill;
But all night long I heard his song played by his brother
watermill.

THE VISIT

My latch was lifted—a tall light crept in.
His wings were bleeding and his feet were sore,
His eyes were vacant as a wind-swept moor:
Most pitiful of glorious cherubim.
I fed him, as I thought an angel must
Be weary from a way so long and hard;
I bathed his feet and balmed his wings with nard,
Then sat before him, nibbling my poor crust.

[71]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"Oh, are you Death?" I asked him.—"I am Faith."

"Then shall I be exalted?" "Nay, brought low."

"What shall I have"—for he had risen to go—

"To prove I have not succored a fell wraith?"

"You shall have doubt and bitterness," he said.

And hence it is that I am worse than dead.

Carlyle McIntyre

TWO POEMS

I HAVE WAITED FOR YOU LONG

I have waited for you long: the sun withdraws
To covert under the hills; I am alone;
No bell disturbs the evening monotone;
I seem to merge with those implacable laws
Which left the pyramid a graven pause
In some gigantic attitude of stone.
There is an advent I have never known,
There is an imminence that overawes.

Approach me, making pallor with your feet:
I have waited for you long, my cold white one;
Let not another muffled night repeat
The tragic gesture of oblivion.
Let all death be centred in your tread . . .
You will not walk with me when I am dead.

[72]

Joseph Auslander

LITTLE LOU

To drink where the birds drink—
Oh, the draught's touch is tender and cool!
Think—
Scattered like soft buds over the brink
Of this delicate pool
The birds leave their kisses for you,
Little Lou.

To dream where the birds dream—
Oh, the wind on the leaves is drowsily wild!
Stream,
Feathers of slumber in magical number
Over our child. . . .
The birds breathe their pale dreams on you,
Little Lou.

To die where the birds die—
Oh, why is the woodland so hushed everywhere!
And why
Are all the leaves listless and limp in mid-air
Beneath a dead sky! . . .
The birds, they are dying for you,
Little Lou.

Joseph Auslander

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A PSALM FOR CATHLEEN NI HOOLIHAN

I—one of the grey sands, cousin to him that was crucified,
Who am come from the breast of Sheba to Caesar's
poisoned wine

Of which no Israelite may die—
Have not forgot the tang of grey sands
Nor the tang of keen black grasses.
I, who have danced in Rome,
And known Roman women of the dances,
I have not strayed from my tribe
Nor am I lost to my sires.
For today I came to an island
Green as my mother's song of Canaan,
Fragrant as rain on the flax by the Nile,
And I heard Cathleen Ni Hoolihan crying.

She silenced her grief, and when I heard her speak
Her breath was a breeze from a hill of blue flowers;
And though there was no crown upon her
I knew she was a queen;
And though she raised a queenly cheek and shoulder
I knew she was a slave.

Tell me who you are, O intruder on my sorrow!

*I am one of the grey sands, cousin to him that was crucified,
Who am come from the breast of Sheba, majestic for all time;
Whose cheeks, like meat of the fig, were violet and white.
And, Cathleen Ni Hoolihan, I heard your crying.*

David Greenhood

She hid her white face in the sorrow of her hair,
That fell to the white petals of her feet.

LIBERTY

Wantonly I've been a freed man!
In a weary, checked freedom;

Far from the spinning in the pure blue of air,
Out of the hymnal curve of worlds.

And I wish I were caught by an orbit in tune
With the choral serfdom of stars.

Here, beneath the tree-tops even, I find
Among meadowing sheep random more sure than mine—

More sure than the frolic of pennies
And the eddy of men in the streets.

Hear, O Democracy:
Unless I be captive to rhythm
I am least free;
Unless the rose can hold me meek,
Or tiredness of dusk put me to sleep,
Unless I be creature of the morning,
Sheep of a shepherd,

I am gone far astray in liberty—
Homesick beyond song.

David Greenhood

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

IN WESTERN MOUNTAINS

I

He stood a moment at the weathered edge
Of the highest cliff, and looked far out with me
Upon great valleys ending in the haze,
And mountains that from haze drove up a wedge
Of snow in skies of lapis-lazuli.
Then something of the littleness of days
His life could span came to him dizzily;
And he, who boasted of his strength with men,
Turned back and grasped a little cedar tree
Near by, for safety; and he shut his eyes,
Shaken, and would not turn to look again. . . .
Back from that cliff-edge, jutting to the skies,
He crawled, and spoke at last with heavy breath:
"God, what a place! What is it? Life or Death?"

II

Our words seemed much in vain. . . .
How many Ages helped those heights attain
Such silence in the sun,
O silent One? . . .

III

Faint jingle of little bells
And the half-heard shuffle of feet,

[76]

Glenn Ward Dresbach

High up on the mountain side,
 Crept down through the waves of heat;
And a gray thread wove through the wide
Cloth of the mountain side.

The burro train came down
 With ores men take apart
As the thing they love the best
 From the multitudinous heart
Of the mountain. But all I could see
Was a gray thread through tapestry.
Glenn Ward Dresbach

QUESTION

When I make ready to go to sea
The prairie ways keep calling me;
And when from the deep I'd be sailing home
I am beckoned seaward by the breaking foam.
Why need my heart be divided so—
Going when I stay, and staying when I go?
Flora Shufelt Rivola

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ROUGH WAYS

BURNT OUT

I started laying sod along the roof
While the smoke thickened. Blown from tree to tree,
The fire came on. . . . At last I dropped the spade,
And bitterly

I watched the timbers smolder and catch fire;
Heard the flame chuckling at the work I'd done—
A pleasant mouthful! Even now I can't
Quite see the fun.

BLIZZARD

All day the wind has sent along the trail
A cry of battle. Now night falls again.
Swept through the dusk like horsemen spectral-pale,
The charging snow-gusts spur across the plain.

Beneath their onslaught fades each wagon-mark.
The winding road is captured. Mad to slay,
They thunder down upon me in the dark;
They strike me, blind me—*I have lost the way!*
Kemper Hammond Broadus

A PORTRAIT

His eyes can be quite old and stern,
But I have often watched them yearn
Over an animal in pain;
And I have seen him through the rain
Carry young lambs into the fold.
If a September night turns cold
He leaves his sleep, and in the gloom
Covers the bushes that might bloom.
I know that when his eyes grow dim
The first young bud will shout to him;
For in the spring I see him kneel
Upon the rigid earth, and feel
With gentle hands among the leaves.
No glistening rim of frost deceives
His instinct for arbutus flowers.
He sings, during his working hours,
In a young voice a rousing song,
And sweeps the lagging work along.
To the delighted earth he brings
Abounding love of living things,
So when he climbs the slopes to meet
The rising sun, they kiss his feet!

Mildred Weston

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

CREEDS

I

Men build rough high walls
Along straight narrow lines
And call them—Creeds.

Men carve distorted shapes
Upon the rough high walls
And call them—Truth.

Men put fantastic rags
On those distorted shapes
And call them—Beauty.

Men keep, forever,
Within those rough high walls
And call it—Right.

Men manacle their minds,
Fearful lest they scale the rough high walls
And be free.

Men blind their eyes,
Fearful lest they see the mysterious world
And be wise.

Men deafen their ears,
Fearful lest they hear
Enthralling music calling them beyond
And go.

John H. Gavin

Men creep onward
Between those rough high walls,
Those grotesque walls, those queer-decked walls,
And call themselves saved.

II

I am not saved,
But, friend, weep not my lot;
For I was born of sun and earth,
And the stars are relatives of mine.

I am brother to the wind,
And the sea is a sister of mine.

I am kinsman to the wolf,
And the lamb is a cousin of mine.

The blood of the eagle is part of me,
Part of me is blood of the dove.
The blood of the lark flows through my veins,
And the venomous blood of the snake.

My mother nestles the pine,
The columbine, aster and rose.

My mother fosters the oak,
And the violet suckles her.

My mother gives life to the palm,
And the poppy grows red at her breast.

[81]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Yes, and nothing trammels me—
Save men, my most beloved fools!

Men would deafen my ears, blinder my eyes,
Manacle my mind!

Ah, my kindred, I'll have no walls around me!—
No rough high walls, no queer-decked walls.

IMMORTALITY

I am immortal as a burst of song,
That quivers from the thrush's throat
And sinks to silence.

I am immortal as the kiss of love,
That wakes the world to melody,
And leaves a memory.

I am immortal as the laughing hour,
That throws her leaven on the sodden heart—
And trips away.

I am immortal as the purple dusk,
That drugs the weary brain to dreams,
And fades.

I am immortal as the wind of March,
That woos the barren earth to life—
And passes.

John H. Gavin

I am immortal as the stubborn hills,
That breast the storms of centuries,
And wear to sand.

I am immortal as the living sun,
That flames a moment in eternity,
And sputters out.

John H. Gavin

SILVER FOG

Hush—hush—hush! Steady as footsteps in the sand,
I hear two other oars crunch in their locks—
And look now, how my boat rocks
To feel another boat close by—
So close, so close, that if I reach my hand . . .

Who are you, who am I,
To halt each other with a cry?

Let us continue blurred and lonely,
Touched by each other's trembling only.
It is so seldom two can be
Each for each a mystery.

Winifred Welles

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A YEAR

I

Before the snow had melted from north slopes
John Mortimer could feel the coming spring.
The imp that stirs the sleeping roots of trees,
And sends the sap up to the highest twigs,
Was in his blood. He envied the gaudy rooster
Who from his throne upon the leaning gate
Shouted his challenge through the morning air
Across the sleeping fields where snowdrifts lay.

One morning, going townward with the milk,
He offered Mary Allindale a ride.
Her father was a queer old man who worked
A little farm, and sometimes played his fiddle
Half the night after his work was done.
She taught the village school. John never knew
How pretty Mary was until that day.

Dusky horizons, deep blue skies where clouds
Float slowly, in the distance three black specks—
They must be horses and a man plodding
Along the boundary line between the gray
Of last year's life and the black earth new-plowed.
Resting upon a bed of last year's leaves,
At noon John Mortimer could see tall ranks

Raymond P. Fischer

Of ripening corn; he dreamed of growing stock
And bigger barns, and Mary Allindale.

The evening wind blew sweet across the fields
Of clover when at last he went to her.
It brought them tell-tale odors of the farms
They passed, the faint warm smell of growing corn,
The cool and heavy incense of the stream
That wanders half asleep through Watson's pasture.
A whip-poor-will was crying in the birches
By the bridge; the stars were tiny points
Of gold above, and the road was dim and gray.

John Mortimer said little, for it seemed
That Mary Allindale belonged to him
That night; the stars and mist-hung road were his,
And awkwardly he took her in his arms.
All the way home he heard her stifled laughter:
He called himself a fool and vowed that he
Would think no more of Mary Allindale.

II

The mower sang from dawn until the sun
Was overhead; from noon hour until night.
When hay was in he started on his barn.
He liked the sound of hammers at the work,
And liked to see the visioned barn take form.

[85]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

August came, and turned green fields to gold.
Now binders moved across the sunny fields;
Men followed them and left the grain in shocks.
The threshers crawled along the country roads—
Great Chinese dragons. Men brought them loads of grain
To be devoured in a cloud of dust.

When the barn was done his neighbors came in crowds,
But Mary did not come. Shrill fiddles scraped,
Feet stamped and shuffled; but he stood outside.
So she preferred to him a good-for-nothing
Fiddling fool who scarcely owned the clothes
Upon his back. "They've gone out west to make
A fortune; then they'll study music." The moon
Came from behind a cloud and grinned at him.
A screech-owl laughed from somewhere in the dark.

III

A steady thud and clump of horses' feet;
A single crow seemed frozen in the sky—
Borne on the cruel wind it drifted by.
John Mortimer plowed on from dark to dark;
He cut his fields in furrows for the frost
And snow to smooth. But earth had lost its goodness—
He did not care whether it shone or rained.
The days when sun poured down like golden wine
Did not deceive—he knew the world was wrong.

Raymond P. Fischer

IV

The tiniest stream is hushed when winter comes.
It cannot whisper to the passing banks
About the great green ocean and its ships.
The days when it has run before the wind
Laughing and beckoning with hands of foam,
The nights when tired of play it has crept up
Some distant bay and murmured round the piling
Of silent rocks, are all forgotten now.

And winter hushed the whispering memories.
He swung his ax all day and had no thoughts
Except the quiet things about his work
That come unsought to every worker's mind.

One morning, going townward with the milk,
He stopped to give the new schoolma'am a lift.
Though he had often passed her on the road
He had never known how beautiful she was.
Though snow still lay in drifts on northern slopes,
Though trees and roadside brush were white with frost,
John Mortimer could feel the coming spring.

Raymond P. Fischer

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

MOVING

POETS and prosers have discussed in many volumes man's relation to his environment, but how much we are what surrounds us is still an open question.

For nearly ten years POETRY has been at home in the not-over-spacious room to the left of the entrance of 543 Cass Street. By the time this number is issued we shall have torn ourselves away from this cubic box of memories; we shall have shifted our furniture and files, our books and back numbers, our gallery of poets' photographs and other pictures, our tempers and temperaments, our hearts and hopes and hospitalities, to a strange place as yet unenriched by history, leaving this atmospheric chamber, doubled in the big Victorian mirror over the mantel-piece, to the coldly calculating advances of the medical department of an insurance company.

But we cannot depart without saying goodbye, without consecrating our farewell by recalling the things which have happened, the people who have entered or lingered, in this old haunted and haunting room. Once it was part of a dwelling which, erected soon after the Great Fire of Seventy-one, housed the family and the books of Ezra McCagg, owner of the largest private library in Chicago. For two or three decades the house stood among congenial neighbors—abodes of the quality, set in spacious grounds. But the quality, including the McCaggs, scattered, and

business penetrated—at first on tip-toe, hesitatingly. The American Bankers' Insurance Company bought the place and connected it in the rear with a new building, the two right-angling an apartment-house on the corner. And while their alterations were still fresh, in the summer of 1912, the inexperienced prospective editor of a poets' magazine-to-be, entered the Ohio Street door one morning in search of a North Side office in the neighborhood.

Whom should she find in possession, as president of the insurance company, but one of the magazine's guarantors—Mr. James P. Whedon of happy memory, one of the most generous of all because his fortune was always moderate. Soon the editor and her first associate, Alice Corbin Henderson, were hospitably installed in one of the two rentable rooms beside the Cass Street entrance, their good friend adding office-desks and chairs to their meagre business equipment. From this room, during that summer of 1912, the first letters and circulars went out in search of contributors and subscribers, and hither came those first responses on which depended the vitality of the magazine.

Ezra Pound's first letter, for example—I have often recorded the cordiality of his co-operation as POETRY's first representative abroad. Along with him came through the mail the other first imagists—H. D. and Aldington, W. C. Williams and Flint and Cannéll. John G. Neihardt greeted us with a tragedy; Joseph Campbell with *The Piper*; Allen Upward with his *Scented Leaves from a*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Chinese Jar; Joyce Kilmer—long before the brutal War which killed him—with *Trees*; John Reed—heroic beloved vagabond—with *Sangar*; Mrs. Conkling with her musical-minded *Symphony in a Mexican Garden*, which, arriving in the nick of time for our first number, aided us in antedating a proposed Boston contemporary who had threatened to requisition our title. And so on—those important early contributors who enriched the magazine with their own values.

The excitement of the adventure is what I remember best from that first experimental year. The novel enterprise hovered, in the mind of the public, on the delicate border-line between the sublime and the ridiculous; and our own minds trembled between a thrill and a laugh. If pride was inflated by authoritative words from poets and critics, it soon collapsed under expert stabs of wrath or ridicule. If a few new and unknown poets aroused our hopes of genius, hundreds astounded us with self-satisfied mediocrity or worse. We were dashed between extremes, like a rubber ball in the play of a juggler; and the thing least expected was what happened next.

Who led the long procession of distinguished visitors whose faces and words now haunt these walls? I think Rabindranath Tagore was the first of the then-unknown-but-now-famous bards who have actually darkened the Cass Street door and sat in our "poets' chair." Tagore, the sage of Bengal, whom we had thought of as in England or maybe India, but who wrote to us from Urbana,

Illinois, upon his first appearance in English in POETRY's third number—December, 1912. And the second was Lindsay, who followed his *General Booth* to Cass Street that first winter, sealing his bardship with the hand of friendship. Witter Bynner and Arthur Ficke, the Damon and Pythias of the art, were among the early arrivals; and Agnes Lee Freer, a newly married resident of Chicago; and Helen Hoyt, who soon graduated from her commercial post into POETRY's office; and Maxwell Bodenheim, then mute and inglorious.

And so on. The magic transformation of abstract name-carrying entities into living, breathing men and women, was then, as it continues to be, the editor's high reward. Poets, it became evident, were not mere voices far away, but human beings who could come into Cass Street and even develop into friends. During our second twelvemonth there were important miracles in this kind. Amy Lowell, pilgrimaging from Boston to Chicago with poems under her arm, seemed a prophet of change—was East coming West at last? was an era passing, and a new one on the way? As if to give answer, here came Carl Sandburg walking solidly into the office when the fateful year 1914 was new or perhaps unborn; entering with his strong hand out and his slow rich loyal voice uttering words of greeting.

In the spring arrived two British poets from opposite curves of the world. The illustrious William Butler Yeats changed from a Poet Enshrined into a living

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Irishman who could give tit for tat to George Moore's imaginative gossip about him which had just appeared. In his honor POETRY "eased out" of Cass Street long enough to give a banquet which has since been recognized as a milestone in the path of the "new movement." And along in April or May, one afternoon when the editor was alone, entered, on his way home from the South Seas, a handsome young Englishman then still obscure — one Rupert Brooke, a member of the "Georgian" group whose first anthology had but recently appeared. How peaceful was the day—how remote the possibility of war—to this blond young poet whose spirit was to "straighten like a flame" at the then-so-imminent bugle call, and run into the war-god's deadly arms with a song!

Sara Teasdale, John Gould Fletcher, Edgar Lee Masters—these and many others, from Missouri, Arkansas, Chicago, the Seven Seas, were Cass Street guests of those early years. Later came Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens—opposite poles of the *renaissance*. The procession goes on still—may it find its way into Erie Street—the procession of shadow-shapes assuming flesh and blood.

Nor should we forget the others—the countless visitors who have arrived at our doors but never in our covers. They come with verses, mostly by mail but often in person; some modestly, some over-sure. They ask for criticism which, if granted, rarely satisfies the urge or ache within. They can not be classified—they are as varied as other growths of the living earth. Rich and poor, bourgeois

and bolshevik, refined and coarse, tragic and absurd—they have played their different parts in Cass Street, strangely unlike but moved always by the same motive: the longing to express themselves, to reveal their naked souls.

If these walls could speak—these walls that we are leaving! They have heard everything discussed and torn to bits—men, women, poems, theories, tendencies, the war, the peace, marriage, divorce, clothes, coiffures, eyebrows, the abstract beauty and the ultimate defeat, life, death and immortality, the weather and the curve of a dog's tail. And they have listened through hours of silence, with nothing ringing but the telephone, while the editor wrote, in old-fashioned long-hand, countless breathlessly-brief notes to poets; or summoned spirits from the vasty deep to infuse wit and wisdom into her editorials, and help her come to the end with a flourish—as now, when she must test POETRY's personality by shifting its environment, as she signs a final farewell to old Five-forty-three.

H. M.

REVIEWS

A WOMAN WITH A HAMMER

The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer,
by Anna Wickham. Introduction by Louis Untermeyer.
Harcourt, Brace & Co.

"The most casual reading—if such a thing were possible—of Mrs. Wickham's work reveals the strength of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

her candor, the intense singleness of her purpose," writes Mr. Untermeyer in an introduction that makes one admire the shrewdness of the gentlemen who chose him for his task. And without wishing to disagree, the hesitant reader may be permitted to wonder what candor and a purpose may have to do with an art. In the present case, they seem to resolve themselves into pugnaciously put platitudes, like the following:

Am I your mate because I share your bed?
Go then! Find each day a new mate outside your house.
I am your mate if I can share your vision.

Nor is one entirely ready to question the possible necessity of this explanation to the person addressed. It is simply that one, as a male in general, has a right to a sort of hypothetical intelligence; for a poet is, presumably, addressing the more illuminated of mankind.

Nor, again, should a reviewer allow himself to be too greatly piqued by a technical insult to his sex; and the present reviewer does not purpose to be so. But even perspicuous generalities do not constitute poetry, and platitudes are not perspicuous; and a perusal of this sort of poetry in quantities enforces boredom. This poet, like too many others, becomes more interested in the reason for her unhappiness than in the unhappiness itself; and, having reasons that are commonplace enough, there is no subtle evasion in her statement, nothing to disguise, however thinly, the barrenness of trodden ground.

A Woman with a Hammer

When she essays a more lyric mode, she is equally stale, and her staleness is even more obvious to the average eye:

With other thrift I turn the key
Of the old chest of Memory,
And in my spacious dreams unfold
A flimsy stuff of green and gold,
And walk and wander in the dress
Of old delights and tenderness.

In *The Cherry Blossom Wand* she achieves something of a literary grace, perhaps slightly more than that; and in *Sehnsucht* an epigram that is really very hard and well done; but otherwise there is little in the book to commend. I quote *Sehnsucht*:

Because of body's hunger are we born,
And by contriving hunger are we fed;
Because of hunger is our work well done,
And so are songs well sung, and things well said.
Desire and longing are the whips of God—
God save us all from death when we are fed.

Mrs. Wickham's handling of sex-problems is too obvious, coming after Lawrence, for serious consideration; indeed, her handling of all topics, coming after someone or something else, is so. Nothing is so awkward to the mind of him addressed as a belated irony.

"She is, in quick succession, burning hot and icy cold; she is driven from fiery antagonisms to smoldering apathy; she is acutely sensitive, restless, harassed," writes our commentator, approaching his climax; and most of us will leave him with the field.

Yoor Winters

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

WOODWINDS

We, the Musk Chasers, by Loureine Aber. Ralph Fletcher Seymour.

The most significant men of this poetic era have surrounded themselves, like the princess who slept for a hundred years, with brambles of objectivity, striving to insure inviolableness, man being resentful of intrusion. All the while the women have given themselves from day to day without reserve. There are rare exceptions, of course. But in the main it is the man who is on his guard, and the woman generous, in poetry and in life. So Loureine Aber has written without subterfuge; as though, like Marie Bashkirtseff, for her own journal. She speaks not alone of and for herself, but puts in order the chaotic protest and exaltation of numberless inarticulate girl-voices. There are in this age so many printed, and in a measure "successful" poets, that one forgets how many times that number of sensitive spirits are more silent than the dumb. For them it is not so simple a matter to net the flickering moth of emotion and mood and preserve it in adequate expression. Quite often the deterrent is laziness and a Nietzschean desire to exhale a god and a universe in one breath. Poetry, says the aspirant, with eyes "in a fine frenzy rolling," is a matter of inspiration and she grasps feverishly at *vers libre*, perverting it into undigested prose divided arbitrarily into lines, unmindful of the euphonic devices by which it can be given beauty and charm. Loureine Aber has done

her service not for these, but for the thousands of girls in cities, either born speechless or submerged in a bedlam of typewriters, adding machines, and switchboards.

Miss Aber makes use not of a niggling rhythm of syllable for syllable, or a subtle rhythm of vowel, but of a large rhythm of word and phrase, so large in swing as to be almost Sandburgian. In it there is more than a trace of the influence of popular syncopation—

Go so far, and halt your tracks,
Catch the first glimpse, turn your backs. . . .

Her work is done with commendable neatness and frugality. I have mentioned Sandburg in connection with rhythm; the resemblance goes deeper than that. But Loureine Aber has lopped off all extraneous material and presented herself in the kernel. Here are no polemics or propaganda. One is often tempted to do with poetry as a friend of mine does with the drama when she divides it into problem plays and good plays; or, to say with Yeats and emphasize well the last word: "One makes of one's struggle with oneself poetry; of one's struggle with others, *rhetoric*." The self is not in the poet, as in elementary forms, a simple whole like the cipher. Rather in the higher organism it is a grouping of rebellious and often anarchistic parts; and in every such being the struggle is both common and unique. Moreover, this is an age of acute self-consciousness, as witness not only its verse but its novel, such as it is—the more diffuse form, therefore the fuller evidence. In order to be authentic one must have

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the keen observation and the frank speech of a surgeon. One has, however, the option of distilling one's speech into the essence of itself. This Miss Aber does not do. She is very simple, but gives glimpses, as in *Old Man*, of an elemental strength that may be developed far:

Dawn sprang wildly to her lips,
And the little hard breasts burst as a waterfall over the rocks,
I, the dark pine at the precipice neck,
Lunged and was still;
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,
Topped, and ran with her youth to the sea.

They said I was wanton and cruel
To have taken her youth at the height,
To have matched the great might
Of my years
With her slender beauty and tremulous fears . . .

I tell you, I lunged and was still,
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,
Topped, and ran with her youth to the sea . . .
Pity me!

Though one may disagree with the poet on "beautiful hills" as a necessary adjunct to the concept of God, *God in the City* is as strong an indictment against those who "wrought pigsties out of gauze" as though it were legally drawn up, witnessed, signed, and sealed. It is a universal confession:

Beautiful hills,
Valleys . . .
And all the other things we think of when we think of God,
Are not here.
I find myself at a loss to formulate much good,
And so I simply say "God!"

As you call "Fido!"
And let it go at that.

If Miss Aber has not yet reached her poetic majority, she is at any rate among the few one would have bring their gifts to perfect fruition through a study of the masters, new and old, and through the sacrifice of ease.

I should like also to add an appreciative word to Mr. Seymour for the format of this book, and to Mr. Blackwell for his delicate decorations.

Pearl Andelson

QUAKER-GRAY AND ROSE

Willow Pollen, by Jeannette Marks. Four Seas Co.

In this first book of verse, with its non-committal cover of quaker-gray, I like best the poems in which Miss Marks' clear, sharp and often whimsical mind is in the ascendancy over her emotions.

In some spirits pain is a flame that flares and consumes till the burning consciousness lights up all around it; in others, a smouldering ache that, however it be heaped with green withes, throws up a screening smoke. In the groping cries of some of these songs of pain I feel a lonely and proud spirit that has been hurt much, but the hurt has blurred instead of sharpening expression.

The cleavage between Miss Marks' mental and emotional approach gives a curious effect of duality of personality. Sometimes it seems as though the verses must have been written by two esthetically dissimilar personalities. On one page you will find the innocent sentiment-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

talities of a piece of album verse, and on the other such acidly lovely lines as these from *White Hair*:

All the warmth has gone out of white hair;
It only answers to the wind,
And lifts and stirs like creeping snow
Close to the frozen scalp of earth.

This disparity can no doubt be partly explained by the inclusion of early poems, but it is surprising to find such pallid stuff as *Your Sunlit Way* between the same covers as a sharply-faceted poem like *Stars*, with its molded form and finely pointed thought.

Often you feel how this southern woman loves the sun. In *Calendar*, where the tender, intimately whimsical gossip about nature recalls Emily Dickinson, the sun is likened to "a bee, a big bee, a burning bee."

Throughout the book are scattered delightful whimsicalities, and stanzas from which luminous images leap like sudden lights out of a mist. Sometimes with an unexpected line Miss Marks can push out the walls of a narrow room into an unlimited horizon. Take the rose-gray magic of this conjured picture:

Sea gulls I saw lifting the dawn with rosy feet.

In Jeannette Marks' more intense moods—*Sea Gulls*, from which the above lines are taken, *Dragon* and others—there is a note of hysteria, a desperate, half-fascinated peering into the depths where

myriad eyes
... float and sway, stab, sting and die away.

[100]

Quaker-gray and Rose

You feel the terror and curiosity of a romantic imagination that is drawn by the sinister-grotesque into the darker ways of fantasy. But always in this nature the romanticist is in eternal conflict with the moralist—no mind-made moralist at that, but one into whose quivering soul is bitten, as with an acid, a sense of inescapable responsibility for others' woes.

For me the charm of *Willow Pollen* lies in those verses where the poet's heart is quiescent, and the alert and supple mind is free to play delicately, as in *Cloud*:

Tut, it is a ship as plain as anything,
Full-spread to find the silver edges of the world
Where ships and island daffodils
Burn, follow sun, dip,
Cling to the shining brim like flapping butterflies . . .

And the "sky" . . .
Now you tell what the sky is!

In the last two lines you touch a certain elfin quality in Miss Marks' mind, a quality that is emphasized in the delicious sleep song, *Rose Toada*:

Shoo, Rose Toada, Shoo!
Jewelled red eyes for you.
Shoo, Rose Toada, Shoo!

Hoosh, Rose Toada, hoosh!
Little green snake in the bush.
Hoosh, Rose Toada, hoosh!

Bizz, Rose Toada, buzz!
Gold on its wings and fuzz.
Bizz, Rose Toada, buzz!

Lola Ridge

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

VICARIOUS EXPERIENCE

Clouds and Cobblestones, by Hortense Flexner. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Though Miss Flexner's poetry builds up the picture of an attractive and cultivated personality, and though her verse is always polished and sometimes sparkling, it is never heart-wringing. It has not, one imagines, wrung the heart of the poet. We find her deeply moved by a number of things—a newspaper account of a pogrom, a child's death in a charity ward, the futility of war. Her sympathetic scope is wide: she sees, with a pitiful vision devoid of mockery, the tragedy of approaching age in the life of a rich and shallow woman; she has a wistful comprehension of a child's day-dreams. But all this is, after all, vicarious experience. One misses the swirl and rush of unimpeded personal emotion.

We find also a generous sprinkling of "poetic" themes and words—*Helen* and *asphodel*—with an occasional charming *vers de société*, of which we may instance *For an Old Lady to whom Sonnets had been Written*; and less often, such a skilfully wrought interpretation as *The Death Mask of an Unknown Soldier*. For the rest, we learn that the poet loves April blossoms, the colors green and gray, the little child next-door—facts agreeably but not memorably recorded. Some of the love-lyrics have fragrance and charm, but none of them seems deeply motivated. There is hardly a poem in the book that seems to have sprung into being because of an irresistible inner urge.

Vicarious Experience

Too frequently these poems are weighted down, verbose: Miss Flexner uses words unsparingly, a defect not excused even by the intrinsic and evocative beauty of many of her favorite words. This criticism does not hold true of her free verse, however—clever, frequently humorous flashes from an active mind, which serve to counterbalance the easy sentimentality of the lyrics.

As a proof that the volume contains much that is lovely, it is only fair to let the poet speak for herself, as she does very characteristically in *Four Things*:

Four things I cannot remember
In the fulness of their grace,
Wind of the spring, curve of the sea,
The moon's pale touch on a white birch-tree,
And your kiss upon my face.

For though I cherish and hold them,
The heavy winter through,
Spring is more gay, the sea foam-wrought
And the birch, are lovelier than I thought;
And a kiss is always new.

Muna Lee

JEAN COCTEAU

Poesies—1917-1920, and *Carte Blanche*, by Jean Cocteau.
Editions de la Sirène, Paris.

M. Cocteau has been described as the "enfant prodige" of contemporary French literature. As to whether this description conveys the whole truth about him or only a part, opinions will necessarily differ. His latest book of poems reveals both his weaknesses and his strength.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Whatever else may be said about them, the fact remains that here is the expression of a very definite personality reacting to an extraordinary degree to visual and tangible stimuli, and endowed with both imagination and fantasy.

Indeed, so vivid are the impressions this poet receives, and so contemptuous is he of the ordinary rules governing the use of language, that in the attempt to fuse the one with the other the result is frequently baffling, even to the most intelligent reader, and must be often completely incomprehensible to the majority. This must be counted a fault, if clarity and universal intelligibility are reckoned as characteristics of the greatest art—and most people take this view. Similarly, contempt or neglect of form can be pushed to extreme limits, and this is a reproach to which M. Cocteau evidently lays himself open. But once these points have been conceded to the—not necessarily carping—critic, it must be admitted that the poems themselves merit serious attention, even if they fail to arouse universal admiration.

We are conscious that the poet is, as it were, walking on a tight-rope all the time; or at least on some level to which the ordinary reader is, to say the least, unaccustomed. To vary the metaphor, we might compare him to an excessively agile mountain goat who will soon be lost sight of by his pursuer unless the latter in his turn manages to reproduce, with tolerable exactitude, each perilous leap from peak to peak so carelessly undertaken by the quarry he pursues. Indeed, unless the

reader possesses the power not only of making mental leaps, but of making the *same* mental leaps as the author of these *Poésies*, he will often find himself hopelessly left behind and floundering in valleys of apparent nonsense.

This poetry is elusive in the extreme, obeying, it might almost be said, no rules but those of the author's imaginative caprices. M. Cocteau reminds one at times of Humpty Dumpty in his treatment of words. "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

But none of this is said in condemnation. Certain means are proper to certain ends, and the ultimate test of a poem, as of anything else, is whether it achieves the effect intended. And it must at once be conceded that M. Cocteau's poems do this in nine cases out of ten. Take, for example, *Ascenseur* (of course unpunctuated):

Tant de douceur
dans notre moelle
c'est un masseur
graissé d'étoiles
Gabriel artificiel
en tombant du ciel
freine un peu

On m'a parlé d'un ascenseur extraordinaire à New York

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

il donne le baiser du vacuum cleaner
et on vous retire en bas comme une loque

Petite cabine vernie
abominable douceur

La mort fauche avec son aile
tous les échelons de l'échelle

une ébauche
d'agonie

Le mât de hune
huilé de lune

on touche le bouton à gauche
à l'angle de la vitrine

La lune douche l'estomac
ouvre la bouche

ut de poitrine

Here we have, in a few lines, all the physical and psychological sensations connected with our experiences of lifts; and the whole poem is on a definitely imaginative level.

Le Voyage en Italie is another good example of M. Cocteau's style, and while it is far too long for quotation, it is rich in happy phraseology and striking images, such as:

Rome Le pape a enfermé tout le monde dehors
Shelley a toujours eu l'air
d'une grande fille noyée

Naples A Paris ce soir
il fait un temps de concierges dehors

Jean Cocteau

While the nostalgia of this most Parisian of Parisians amongst the monuments of Rome and the "*plafonds lourds*" is eloquently voiced in the following poignant lines:

J'ai besoin de Paris et des Champs Elysées
j'ai besoin de Paris je ne suis pas de Rome
je ne suis pas de Moscou Marie
rue d'Anjou douceur angévine
pauvre Marie j'ai mal à mes Champs Elysées.

In *Batterie* the poet reveals another side of himself—his love of the sun and of the contrast between the black skins of negroes and the azure skies under which they live and toil. This note is of frequent occurrence, but nowhere is it more eloquently expressed than in this hymn to the sun, which is one of the most formal of the poems in this volume:

Soleil je t'adore comme les sauvages
à plat ventre sur le rivage

Soleil tu vernis tes chromos
tes paniers de fruit, tes animaux

Fais-moi le corps tanné, salé
fais mon grand douleur s'en aller

Fais braire la cigale en haut du pin
fais-moi sentir le four à pain.

Fais-moi répandre mes mauvais rêves
soleil, boa d'Adam et d'Eve!

Fais-moi un peu m'habituer
à ce que mon pauvre Jean soit tué.

[107]

POETRY: *A. Magazine of Verse*

The poem is too long to quote in its entirety, but it is one of the most striking in the collection—a collection redolent of the exoticism of ships and ports, American bars and sky-scrapers, negroes, films, ice-cream sodas and the melancholy of swings and roundabouts—the whole seen through the eyes and filtered through the sensibility of a highly cultured, versatile, imaginative, curious and extremely modern mind.

Carte Blanche is a reprint of a series of articles which appeared in *Paris Midi* during the summer of 1919. They treat of a variety of subjects, ranging from a discussion of the latest movements in French music and painting to essays in sheer reporting, such as the description of the *Défilé de la Victoire*, at the peace celebrations on July fourteenth, 1919. They furnish another example of the versatility of M. Cocteau and of the never-failing lightness of his touch and the quickness of his comprehension. The paper devoted to Landru is full of good things, and a model of this kind of topical essay.

Landru inaugure le retour du Fait-Divers civil. Avec lui le chien écrasé retrouve ses droits. . . . L'amoureux médiocre brûle des souvenirs. . . . n'est-il pas plus simple de brûler toute la dame? . . . Si Landru se livrait à cette liquidation, j'aime l'imaginer au coin du feu, tisonnant les cendres de sa belle d'un air rêveur et soupirant: "Du courage—il ne faut plus penser à tout cela."

Perhaps some readers will prefer M. Cocteau's prose to his verse: enough has perhaps been quoted to reveal the quality of both.

Rollo H. Myers

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

MORE NEW MAGAZINES

If new magazines may be assumed to indicate a certain vitality in the art they represent, modern poetry may be congratulated; for its voices are speaking everywhere, in organs from leaflet to folio size. Some of these organs are for poets only, but most of them admit him with writers of tales, critics, sometimes limners and composers.

Here is *The Beacon*, published in Oxford, England, by B. H. Blackwell, who has given so many young English poets their first appearance in small volumes beautifully made. *The Beacon* "aims to deal broadly and constructively with three essential and inseparable things—Education, Religion and Art." The first number, introduced by a poem by Tagore, and *A Credo for a New Era* by Stephen Graham, contains interesting articles and drawings, but little in our special province.

Broom, our international Roman contemporary which is now in its fifth number, has lost Alfred Kreymborg from its staff. Harold A. Loeb now conducts it in Rome, and Lola Ridge has recently become its American editor, her office being at 3 East Ninth Street, New York.

Another international monthly began in Barcelona, Spain, last February. *Prisma* proclaims itself "*una revista internacional de poesia*," and enriches its first number with Opffer's portrait of Carl Sandburg, an article on the latter by Louis Butcher Lee, and translations of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

nine of his shorter poems, including *Jan Kubelik* and *Cool Tombs*. Indeed, Spain has been sending us a number of magazines of late. Two from Madrid are *La Pluma*, now in its third year, and the first three numbers of *Indice* (*Revista Mensual*).

And another impending international is *Secession*, which, "instigated at Paris, opens fire this spring at Vienna, will march on Berlin, and eventually establish itself in New York. . . . It will, in its early numbers, expose the private correspondence, hidden sins, and secret history of its American contemporaries—*The Dial*, *Little Review*, *Broom*, *POETRY*, etc."

From the far antipodes comes *The Australian Poetry Annual of 1922*, published by the Melbourne Literary Club, and presenting poems sometimes creditable, but not yet exciting or suggestive of the locale.

Youth, the Chicago monthly which we welcomed last autumn, must have been beloved of the gods, as it died with a promptness befitting its title. To *The Wave*, also published by Steen Hinrichson, we may wish a longer and more prosperous life. Its editor is Vincent Starrett, and it contains poems and prose by a number of our friends; also, in the second number, a group of beautiful wood-cuts by Birger Sandzen.

The Reviewer, of Richmond, Virginia, now in its second volume, is discovering some interesting material in the South. We quoted last month one of Mrs. Peterkin's bits of Negro folk-lore.

From here and there come tiny leaflets of local verse—for instance, *The Bard*, from Dallas, Texas; and *The Poet's Scroll* from Sherwood, Oklahoma. No strong evidence of genius in these, but they represent each a group and an aspiration.

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE P. S. A.

To the Editor: Please let me say a word as to your correspondent's report of the P. S. A. annual dinner.

She begins with an interested reference to other dinners—banquets of Shoe-lace and Ribbon Manufacturers, Flower and Feather Manufacturers—which may have been held that evening at the Hotel Astor and which might have appealed to the avowed Rabelaisian taste of your reporter more than did the dinner which she attended. The poets were “decorous”, she complains, they were “all in standardized evening array.” So, as far as I could observe, in spite of her having written verse, was your reporter.

She follows with a saucily lackadaisical account of the program, some of it accurate. The gist of the remarks that bored her was very much akin to the gist of the leading editorial in the April POETRY: “Local loyalties are turning with deep enthusiasm toward the arts.” She would evidently prefer a clever monopoly—perhaps

[III]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

in Chicago. She missed the deliberate intimation of the evening. Some of us realize that New York is quite as provincial as Chicago; and the Executive Committee deferred at the January dinner, all along the line, to speakers from the other provinces.

She instances with relish Miss Lowell's challenge to the Society. Miss Lowell, a critic who has quaintly and ably won for herself the right to be blunt, assumed an absence of "sharp clash" and "critical emotional insight" from the Society's meetings and announced her preference, as one often does, for her own judgments and methods of expression. Miss Lowell was largely wrong in her assumption. Her "clash", this time, was rather flat than sharp, for the reason that she was recklessly judging, by meetings of other poetry groups, the regular sessions of the P. S. A., where there has certainly been more "sharp clash" than at any smaller contemporary gatherings of poets anywhere, whether public or private. As to "critical emotional insight", it is easier to talk about than to exhibit, especially at a dinner.

Miss Dudley concedes "an hour of values contemplative and exciting." That seems to me a fair ratio in a professional program. She complains of "four hours of futility." During two of those hours, she and the "army captain" she mentions were free to contribute at their own table whatever they desired of Rabelaisian stimulus and general interest. If they chose to contribute "futility", it was their own fault.

From the President of the P. S. A.

Large dinners, whether social or professional, are not ideal means of intellectual or emotional exchange. In lieu of something better, they have become an occasional method of assemblage for the membership of organizations. The P. S. A., in addition to its monthly meetings of give and take, chooses to listen quietly once a year to some group or other of members and guests. This year all the speakers, except Mr. Chang Peng Chun, were Americans, from widely different parts of the country. There were no expatriates even. Only one of them had been heard before by the Society. Some of them may have been dull. So were some of their critics. But none of the speakers, if you will forgive me, made the lapse of mistaking mere smart distemper for "critical emotional insight."

That sort of lapse, if you will forgive me again, is becoming too frequent in the pages of POETRY. Miss Dudley is not the only offender. Are there no stages, dear editor, between the stodgy and the supercilious? Are there no happier ways of avoiding one kind of emptiness than by substituting another? Is sharp crash valuable to you? Must a crackling of thorns boil the pot and the poet? Is even prose less important than pose? Should a magazine which has shown signs of health permit itself these amusing but unlovely sounds of literary indigestion?

Incidentally let me thank you for printing in a recent issue an honest and thoughtful article by Mr. Baker Brownell.

Witter Bynner

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A WORD FOR MR. GUEST

To the Editor: I suppose you will hardly care to print a brief protest against your condemnation of Mr. Guest. Let me say at once that I entirely agree with you that his verses are not poetry, perhaps not even literature, in your and my sense of the term. Neither is the bulk of Longfellow. Yet both Longfellow and Mr. Guest touch the human heart in a fashion quite out of the reach of most of the estimable writers who monthly adorn your pages. Mr. Guest's trivial little poems impart something—perhaps not much, but something—of the sweet high consecration of rhythmic ecstasy to the common things that make up the daily experience of millions of readers who would be quite insensible to Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell. Also, I think you vastly over-estimate the importance of Mr. Guest's reward. It is precisely proportioned to his production: dull, sordid dollars, and the loud vociferation of the thick-breathed vulgar which your finer-natured poets would instinctively disdain. And I disagree totally with your view that Mr. Guest is a menace to literature. On the contrary, I do not believe that his verses distract one single reader from a better order of poetry, while they may lure many readers, through the medium of his rather obvious music, to something much more worth while. Surely you do not imagine that, if Mr. Guest were altogether eliminated from a world of which I esteem him a considerable benefactor, the circulation of POETRY would be increased by

A Word for Mr. Guest

a single subscriber. Those who read Guest will never read Sandburg, and those who read Sandburg will never read Guest. Why not let each reader have what appeals to him and helps him?
Gamaliel Bradford

NOTES

The initial Blindman Prize of \$250 has been awarded by the Poetry Society of South Carolina to Grace Hazard Conkling, for *Variations on a Theme*, which was named by Miss Lowell, the appointed judge, as the best of many poems submitted in a contest open to all poets writing in English.

Mr. William H. Simpson, of Chicago, who has appeared in POETRY before, has been for years in the service of the Santa Fe railroad, of which he is advertising manager. Extensive travels on and from this road have interested him in our south-western wonderland and its aboriginal life. Mr. Simpson used to write verses in his youth, and of late he has resumed the art more seriously.

Mr. Carlyle McIntyre, of Los Angeles, has also appeared in POETRY, but has not yet published a volume. A book, published some years ago by a poet of almost identical name, is not his.

Mr. Glenn Ward Dresbach, of El Paso, Texas, will soon issue his third book, *In Colors of the West* (Henry Holt & Co.).

Mr. David Greenhood, now a resident of San Bernardino, Cal., was a member of Witter Bynner's poetry class at the University of California a few years ago.

Flora Shufelt Rivola (Mrs. Charles) of Yankton, S. D., is another familiar contributor.

The other poets of this month appear here for the first time.

Mr. Raymond P. Fischer, formerly of Chicago, is now in Upland, Cal.

Winifred Welles (Mrs. H. H. Shearer), of New York, is the author of *The Hesitant Heart*, published last year by B. W. Huebsch.

Mr. Joseph Auslander, born in Philadelphia of Spanish and Russian parentage, and a graduate of Harvard, is now studying at Oxford, England. His poems have appeared in various magazines.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Mr. Kemper Hammond Broadus is the young son of Edmund Kemper Broadus, of the faculty of the University of Manitoba in Alberta, who appeared in early numbers of *POETRY*, and who has just published a book on the Poets Laureate of England.

Mr. John H. Gavin lives in Chicago, Miss Mildred Weston in Pittsburgh, Pa.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Open Shutters*, by Oliver Jenkins. Will Ransom, Chicago.
The Cockpit of Idols, by Muriel Stuart. Methuen & Co., Ltd., London.
A Shropshire Lad, by A. E. Housman. Henry Holt & Co.
The Wilderness, by George H. de la Vergne. Knickerbocker Press, New York.
The Power of Love and Other Verses, with *Addenda*, by Irving S. Richter. Privately printed, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Odes and Lyrics, by Hartley Burr Alexander. Marshall Jones Co., Boston.
Saturday Market, by Charlotte Mew. (New ed.) Macmillan Co.
A Silver Pool, by Beulah Field. Moffat, Yard & Co.
Near Bethlehem and Other Poems, by J. Edgar Smith. Privately printed, Washington, D. C.
White April, by Harold Vinal. (*Yale Series of Younger Poets.*) Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.
Kinfolks, by Ann Cobb. Houghton Mifflin Co.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- The Book of American Negro Poetry*, edited by James Weldon Johnson. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
A Chapbook, by seven students of the University of Columbia, Vancouver, B. C.
The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri (line for line Translation), by Melville Best Anderson. World Book Co., New York, N. Y.

PLAYS:

- The Last Voyage of Odysseus*, by Perry Boyer Corneau. Old Tower Plays, Chicago.
Portrait of Mrs. W., by Josephine Preston Peabody. Houghton Mifflin Co.

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From an editorial in the New York Sunday Tribune.

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Of Poetry, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for April 1, 1922.

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Vol. XX

No. III

oetry

**A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
June 1922**

Conversation

by Isidor Schneider

A Mood

by Jos. Andrew Galahad

A Sailor's Note-book

by Robert J. Roe

Maxixe, by Osbert Sitwell

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How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of
Portavi
Louis Golding

Vol. XX

No. III

POETRY for JUNE, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Conversation I-II—The Mist | <i>Isidor Schneider</i> 117 |
| A Mood | <i>Joseph Andrew Galahad</i> 123 |
| Night Above the Tree Line. | <i>Raymond Holden</i> 124 |
| These Fields at Evening | <i>David Morton</i> 125 |
| Maxixe | <i>Osbert Sitwell</i> 126 |
| Friendship | <i>Daniel Henderson</i> 127 |
| Cockle Shells | <i>Elizabeth Coatsworth</i> 128 |
| The Ship—The Cows—Stream—Broadway—At Versailles | |
| Portrait of a House—The Last of the Cowboys | <i>Mary Carolyn Davies</i> 131 |
| Your Words | <i>Athena McFadden</i> 134 |
| Owl-blasted | <i>John McClure</i> 135 |
| Fantasy | <i>Helen C. Russmann</i> 136 |
| Two Poems | <i>Kathryn White Ryan</i> 137 |
| Moonlight—Convent | |
| Three Poems | <i>Alba N. Turner</i> 138 |
| Old Age—Our Sorrow—Margarette | |
| Suggestions | <i>Meredith Beyers</i> 141 |
| Bit of Curls—Fat Man | |
| A Sailor's Note-book | <i>Robert J. Roe</i> 142 |
| Typhoon—Sea I-III—Wind I-III—Moon—Cautious—Appa- ritions—Sailor—Barney—Insight—Jock—Stars—Meinself | |
| Prosody | <i>H. M.</i> 148 |
| Reviews: | |
| Charlotte Mew | <i>Marion Strobel</i> 152 |
| A Spirit of Quest | <i>Emanuel Carnevali</i> 155 |
| A Promise | <i>Pearl Andelson</i> 157 |
| Slight Songs | <i>Muna Lee</i> 160 |
| A Japanese Cosmopolite | <i>Jun Fujita</i> 162 |
| Dante in English Rhyme | <i>Henry B. Fuller</i> 165 |
| Correspondence: | |
| A Word from Mr. Untermeyer | <i>Louis Untermeyer</i> 168 |
| Robert Burns Wilson | <i>A Kentuckian</i> 171 |
| Notes and Books Received | 172, 174 |

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JUNE 1922

CONVERSATION

I

"SUPPOSE," he thought, "there are invisible beings,
 fairies, elves;
Suppose rheumatism is nothing but Robin-pinches;
Suppose a wind is only the beating of fairy wings
And fairy fingers doffing your hat to invisible majesties."

He sat on the bench motionless.
The dust sifted upon him,
Leaves caught upon his clothing,
Vagrant sheets of paper wrapped about his feet.

"Chance is decent and does not leave the silent things
 exposed.

She covers the stone with moss, and spreads
A coverlet of mold upon the unmoving things.

[117]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"Suppose I stayed here a year?
Would the elves come and cover me with leaf drift, and
dust
Carefully shaken over me?
Would they sow seeds under my feet?
Would the moss grow from the clay on the soles of my
shoe?
Would I be wound in spider-webs?"

II

Another one sat down beside him
And cut his world in two.
He moved back as if to drag back the severed half,
But the other one held it tenaciously.
His very shadow was a seal of possession, ineffaceable.
For a moment they sat still, taut,
Like two who tug at a rope.

"Pleasant day?"

"Pleasant day!"

And so they fused their world with sticky speech.

"I was wondering how it would be
To be a year in one place—
For the rain to soften you, and the wind to mold you,
And the dust to fill in your cracks."

"You would be a tree then:

[118]

Isidor Schneider

Your toes would drip into roots;
Your arms would be long brown branches
Holding leaves like cups to fill with sunlight and dew."

"If I were silent
The invisible realms would open about me;
The unseen people would build a road between my feet—
They would build a city in the shadow of my knees,
Like cities built below mountains.
I might be their sphinx, satiate with questions."

"There is no invisible world
Except the worlds you do not see.
These can be reached by travel.
Your stillness will not be inviolate—
All things using life will apportion you
With shrewd husbandry:
The birds will inherit your head and your shoulders;
Hungry things will not spare you;
Insects and beasts will dispute your flesh,
And bound your body for dwelling-places."

"There is no need of travel—
Stillness will invite these other worlds
That are delayed by distance.
The wind will plant about my feet
Their final flowers;
The rivers will wash their soil under my roots;
The travel-urge will throw

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Their curious sampled people out to me.
The other worlds I mean are mixed with this—
They course within our life
Like floods within the ocean."

"I do not think these things—
They walk like strangers out beyond my mind;
Only of this world, which I see suddenly
Like clouds disclosed by lightnings.
Love came to me suddenly;
Hatred armed my hands once,
And I knew remorse.
Hunger and a red wound
Taught me the thin texture of life."

"They say the sky is distance only,
And the color of distance is blue.
And that is why violets, who have the distance of fragility,
Are blue.
Since there are larger worlds around us
There must be smaller other-worlds within us,
If one could find them."

"We who are within the waiting-rooms of existence
Should not peer into the deeper halls,
Nor tempt the attendants with our lauding curiosity."

"Can you not watch how the ceilings and the walls
Mark the backs of other rooms?
Can you not let your mind tentatively therein?"

"No—I would still suspect it."

"Well—?"

"Well—I'll be going; good-day?"

"Good day!"

And one man walked away, brushing from him crawling
words;

While the other sat still,

Wiping from his world

The stains of conversation.

THE MIST

Is death a mist
In which life becomes invisible?

Yesterday
The world ended in mist.
It lay shrunken by immobility
Into a gray coffin.

The steeple rose,
Prodded and pricked the mist
Like a question
Investigating doubt.
Its dim spire

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Found the horizon new arranged
In stories.
The world became strange,
Ungrateful
Of the jagged lights
That seamed its veils.

To me, walking,
The long road unravelled
A guiding string;
And my eyes
Carried before and behind
Its constant small visibility.

I faced the mist-made microcosm—
Where pebbles are boulders,
Puddles lakes,
Sidewalk-cracks long chasms,
The curb a precipice;
Where towers flew,
Roofs floated like rafts;
And smoke wreaths
Were like dark veins
Under a skin.

Is death a mist
In which life becomes invisible?

Isidor Schneider

A MOOD

I am sad for the beauty that is dead:

For the sunset that I saw tonight
As I walked on a hill.

For the tangle of clouds in the light
Where the rim of the sun was showing still.

For the breath of a lily slim and pale
That I brought from the forest yesterday.
For the song of a lark on an old fence rail;
For a ground-wren's nest in the last year's hay.

For three slim dogwoods on a mountain-side,
Like ghost trees whitely nodding at the grass;
For a field of buttercups upon a river bank—
For a jaybird jeering shrilly as we pass.

For a wild rose by an alder tree—
For a ginger bloom more fragrant than the rose.
For a swallow sailing by with sapphire wings
Where a waterlily in the shallows grows.

For all the things that are passing and are fair;
For the shortness of the hour that gave them birth.
For the paucity of human hearts that care;
For all the things that are only of the earth.

I am sad for the beauty that is dead.

Joseph Andrew Galahad

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

NIGHT ABOVE THE TREE LINE

You berries, that are full of the dark dusks
Of mountains and the moisture of chill dew,
Swell on your stems and break your ripened husks
For lips which it would wither you to lose—
If there are lips to what is wandering here
Feeling you underfoot in the rocky night,
Moving about like wind, blowing you clear
Of mists, hanging your leaves with drops of light.

Listen! There is a sound of water falling
Down the dark-shafted night into the trees.
Wild birds that should be quiet now are calling.
How shall I sleep tonight, troubled with these?
The cool wind through the moon's invisible strings
Blows like a striking of clear silver bars;
The great black peak shudders and leaps and swings,
And I am blinded by the fall of stars.

I cannot rest. I cannot quiet my limbs.
A sense of climbing keeps my body burning,
And the white flame sweeps over me and dims
All that inclines within me toward returning.
Did I see only earth once long ago,
And only flesh in faces turned to me?
Sleep? Rest? With my senses shaken so
And the world's valleys lost so dizzily?

Raymond Holden

Why have I come so near the fearful stars
When what is in me is so much a want
Of utter dark too thick for any wars
Of flesh and spirit dazzlingly to haunt?
I do not know. I do not want to know;
Only to make a fire of weariness
And fling myself upon it, and burn, and go
Thinly, like smoke, to wind-walled quietness.

Raymond Holden

THESE FIELDS AT EVENING

These wear their evening light as women wear
Their pale proud beauty for some lover's sake,
Too quiet-hearted evermore to care
For moving worlds and musics that they make;
And they are hushed as lonely women are—
So lost in dreams they have no thought to mark
How the wide heavens blossom, star by star,
And the slow dusk is deepening to the dark.

The moon comes like a lover from the hill,
Leaning across the twilight and the trees;
And finds them grave and beautiful and still,
And wearing always, on such nights as these,
A glimmer less than any ghost of light,
As women wear their beauty through the night.

David Morton

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MAXIXE

Los enanitos

Se enojaren

(*Old Mexican Song*)

The Mexican dwarfs can dance for miles,
Stamping their feet and scattering smiles;
Till the loud hills laugh and laugh again
At the dancing dwarfs in the golden plain,
Till the bamboos sing as the dwarfs dance by
Kicking their feet at a jagged sky,
That, torn by leaves and gashed by hills,
Rocks to the rhythm the hot sun shrills.
The bubble sun sketches shadows that pass
To noiseless jumping-jacks of glass
So long and thin, so silent and opaque,
That the lions shake their orange manes, and quake,
And a shadow that leaps over Popocatepetl
Terrifies the tigers, as they settle
Cat-like limbs cut with golden bars
Under bowers of flowers that shimmer like stars.
Buzzing of insects flutters above,
Shaking the rich trees' treasure-trove
Till the fruit rushes down, like a comet whose tail
Thrashes the night with its golden flail.
The fruit hisses down with a plomp from its tree,
Like the singing of a rainbow as it dips into the sea.
Loud red trumpets of great blossoms blare

Osbert Sitwell

Triumphantly like heralds who blow a fanfare;
Till the humming-bird, bearing heaven on its wing,
Flies from the terrible blossoming,
And the humble honey-bee is frightened by the fine
Honey that is heavy like money, and purple like wine;
While birds that flaunt their pinions like pennons
Shriek from their trees of oranges and lemons,
And the scent rises up in a cloud, to make
The hairy swinging monkeys feel so weak
That they each throw down a bitten cocoanut or mango.
Up flames a flamingo over the fandango;
Glowing like a fire, and gleaming like a ruby,
From Guadalajara to Guadalupe
It flies; in flying drops a feather . . .
And the snatching dwarfs stop dancing and fight together.

Osbert Sitwell

FRIENDSHIP

No foe could strike this blow—
Could draw this blood, this tear!
By the deep wound I know
A friend was here.

Daniel Henderson

[127]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COCKLE SHELLS

THE SHIP

"The sky is great and the land is great and the ocean is great," said he;

"And a bird is a lovely thing in the air, and a supple fish in the sea;

And a horse is a beautiful thing to watch, running so gay and free.

"But a ship that is built of land-grown oak, with her sails in the wind," said he,

"And who goes and comes in the very thick of the calm and storm of the sea,

Is light as a bird and swift as a fish, and like a horse runs free!"

THE COWS

I have seen cows that lay in the summer meadows,
Hearing the sound of breezes amidst the grass
While every hair in the sunlight glittered with rainbows.

Oh, but they were bland and placid and smooth and beautiful!

Their mates were great bulls with curl-matted horns
And the bellow of lions.

Their offspring were playful and gay,

Elizabeth Coatsworth

With innocent staring eyes.
Laborers toiled in the fields to find them food for the
 winter,
And built them against the wind dark temples scented
 with hay;
While women eased them of milk
That swelled their udders at twilight.
I have seen cows that lay in the meadows like gods,
Breathing forth peace that smelled of dampness and
 clover.

STREAM

Like a troubadour riding to battle,
Flinging his sword in the air
And catching it
As he sings,
The stream comes in white armor down the hillside.

BROADWAY

That man has the head of a goat and the paunch of Silenus,
As he walks down the sidewalk alone conventionally
 going to dine.
His little bright eyes are glancing, his little hard feet are
 prancing
As though all the crowd about him were maenads and
 fawns in a line.

[129]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The horns of the motors for him are puffed by the cheeks
of centaurs;
The buildings and shops are cliffs, draped and festooned
with the vine.
The little cane that he swings he has used on the ribs of
his donkey
When the ground was rocking with laughter and the trees
were reeling with wine.

AT VERSAILLES

I have watched the hours pass along the walks of Versailles
Among the drifting autumn leaves:
Madame Four-O'Clock a tumble of silken skirts and smiles,
On a donkey her lover lured forward with brown southern
pears.
Madame Five-O'Clock, pouting among the petunias;
Flower-face, flower-hands, flower-breasts barely sheathed
in her bodice.
Madame Six-O'Clock languishing by a balustrade,
Her thin yellow hand on the head of a black page.
And Madame Seven, a white shadow among the tree-
trunks,
As still and as arch as the statues upon their pedestals.
Elizabeth Coatsworth

PORTRAIT OF A HOUSE

Far from a town
I know a house that's a girl's dream come true.
And there is one room done in blue,
In queer still blues, with shades drawn down.

In a room near
Are candles, thick as a man's arm,
Of yellow wax, and then a warm
Great golden bowl of burning bloom;
And past, there is a little room
For tea, and being glad and proud
One is alive. There is a crowd
Of tall flowers shaken as with fear
Outside a door. And walking by
Three great windows filled with sky,
We came to a Chinese room
Where a Buddha sits in gloom.
He is as still as witchery
But in his eyes weird things I see,
Like the waiting to be wild
In the eyes of a young child.

Past this room are wonders still—
Altar vestures from Brazil,
Blue and silver ones and red;
She loves old rich things. She said,
"Cream or lemon in your tea?"

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

In a strange laughing voice. She has
Dusk eyes, I think, or maybe blue,
And a heart for telling secrets to.

A bear-skin out of Russia yawns
On her wide hall. There have been dawns
A-many on her waiting lawns.

The rocky cliffside, glacier-scarred,
And mountain trails are in her yard.
The widest river of the west
Goes past her door. There is a jest
In all she does, and a greatness too.
And little gardens hidden where
Her guests find them unaware.

Gravely in the court beyond
Her gardeners have made a pond
Where waterlilies were, and where
They are gone now, except two rare
And perfect ones, like trembling young
Shy things; and deep and red among
The lily roots the goldfish go
In a discontented row,
Breaking and wheeling. A white wall
Bears bowls of trailing vines. There fall
Out of the air great seagulls. High
Cliffs and rough crags break up the sky,
Across the river; and beyond

Mary Carolyn Davies

The level lawn, the level pond,
The mountain rises menacing;
And a great waterfall comes down
Like a sullen tiger's spring.
I have watched her calm eyes cling
To the waterfall—while slow
And sweet she spoke, in her still way,
Of books and men that we two know.

Prisoner in her house she dwells,
As do we all. Our rooms are cells.
Loveliness is only bars
To shut out faces from the stars.

THE LAST OF THE COWBOYS

They have gone down like the sunset, who like the sun
Were mighty and high and scornful; their hour is done.
Slowly into the night they ride, each one.

They have gone down like the sunset, sharp on the hill.
A moment against the sky they stood, until
The dark came down and they met it, stoic and still.

Mary Carolyn Davies

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

YOUR WORDS

*God gave you words, so you must give them to me.
Let me lie here on the ground
Breaking brittle pine-needles with my fingers.
You have no right to keep a gift—
God gave you words, so you must give them to me.*

Your words are perfect things—
They are birds with full smooth breasts,
That fly in wide clean skies
And sleep in warm brown nests.

Your words are little globes
Of glass, or ruby-flake;
They tinkle in the air
And whisper as they break.

Your words are little ships
With silver shining sails,
That sing against the winds
Like purple nightingales.

Your words are colored fruits
In crystal jars, and tall.
You break them with your lips;
I catch them as they fall.

*So give me your words. Let them slip
Cool fingers through my hair.*

Athena McFadden

*There is no world but me, no heaven but you. . .
Somewhere outside of these there may be birds,
And fruit, and ships, and little crystal globes.*

For me there are only your words. . .

Athena McFadden

OWL-BLASTED

"Farmer Hunt doubted whether there really were any songs which he seemed to hold in his hand. . . . Ah, these solid houses, real estates, have wings like so many nimble mosquitoes, and do exceedingly hop and avoid me!"—Emerson's Journals.

"You can trap no sweet . . .
From such nimble things—
They have goblin feet,
They have goblin wings.

"Chase them everywhere,
Everywhere they flee:
Emptier than air
Are the world and we."

Who has heard the madmen
Shall remember long
All their goblin music
And their goblin song.

John McClure

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FANTASY

High in the cloudy skies,
Along the barren hills,
Where short brown grass grows sparingly and spots of
orange earth shine forth,
Where trees of sombre brown uprise,
Fantastic horses roam.

Cropping the scanty grass,
Their full white tails blown outward by the wind,
They move about majestically with slow and tranquil step.

Their necks are strangely thin and beautiful.
Their fiery eyes, fixed steadily on the ground,
Seem to be contemplating inward wonders.
With their unshod hoofs they leave no mark on the
bare hard earth.

Slowly they move,
With their heads bent downward
Munching the short spare grass,
While the passing clouds, grey with incipient storm,
Hang low over the hills.

They know no day nor night,
Those pale fantastic horses;
For daylight on the hills is but a cloud-grey shadow,
And night is faintly luminous with livid mist.

Helen C. Russmann

Slowly they roam,
With their unsleeping eyes fixed inward,
Treading with easy step the inaccessible heights,
Moving in tranquil peace
Along the cloudy hills.

Helen C. Russmann

TWO POEMS

MOONLIGHT

It has covered the earth as this sheet my knee
Where my body lies like a reed in snow.
It has altered my room to a satin tomb.
It has made of my soul a silver flute—
A silver flute in a white case, mute;
A silver flute filled with prisoned song,
Long shrill song for your lips to free.

CONVENT

As into a blue lake
The little drops of days
Fall quietly.
The lake fills but does not stir.

Kathryn White Ryan

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THREE POEMS

OLD AGE

Drink.
The fountain is bending low.
It is being filled with emptiness.
The day is spilling its light.

Drink,
Bending the unyielding knee.
There's a tremor
In the thought of height—
The snow of the years is fallen.

Drink.
The black shadows are toppling
Over into thin waters.

In the night,
When thou art removed
From the fountain,
Thy thirst will cease to be
A burden.
A vision shall fill the night.

OUR SORROW

Your sorrow died,
And you buried it;

[138]

Alva N. Turner

And then you dried
Your tears
As you went your way
Forgetting it:
While mine lives through the years.

Men understood your sorrow
Because it died,
And pitied your tears,
Which you have dried;
But they leer at my sorrow
And sneer,
Because it lives through the years.

MARGARETTE

She's a clever little witch,
And knows it;
But it has not spoiled her heart.

The beauty of her tressed head
Is enhanced by the cunning of her fingers.
Her piquant and mobile face
Reflects
The sunshine of her soul,
And betrays the clouds of it.
I like to study her face.

[139]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Her sky-blue eyes
Vie with the softness
Of the summer heavens,
When the nimbus has fled
And cumulus dreams on the sky-line.

The naif beauty of her white teeth
Remains intact,
And laughs
At the dedal ruse of the dentist.

Last Sunday, at the spring
Which pours its potable silver
For the mendicant town of Spring Garden,
She said with a smile,
Before Lillian and the others,
That she believed
She'd made a great hit with me.
I mocked the smile of her,
And confessed that she had.

She's twenty and I'm forty—
But that's no difference to her;
For she's a clever little witch,
And knows it.

Alva N. Turner

SUGGESTIONS

BIT OF CURLS

Furious little bit of curls
Struggling against the gale!

Mad at God because the wind
Is stronger than her tiny body.

But little girl,
You do not have to!
Turn about,
And let it take you,
Fluttering, laughing,
Over the prairie,
Butterflying through the air.

FAT MAN

Shall we worship you
As god of Laughter
And Good-nature—
Or shall we crisp your flesh
As sacrificial offering
To Bacchus!

Meredith Beyers

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A SAILOR'S NOTE-BOOK

TYPHOON

I have heard many men in many tongues
Hollering for something they wantit.
Un I have heard the typhoon
Quarrelling with his brother the sea
On the lee beaches.

"This is mine island," says Typhoon.

"Is mine," says the sea.

"I bring birds what makes trees."

"I pile sand for to make beaches."

"Is mine what for I love it."

"Is mine what for I marry it."

Typhoon takeit island by trees.

Sea grab at the beaches.

Un when they is through—

Palms piled like jack-straws,

Beaches pulled to pieces.

SEA

I

Sea is dumb fellow,
Which don't know what he wants
Un is not happy.

II

Sea is wie bucket full with gold-dust,
Un ship is little piece of dirt
What Somebody would snap out pretty soon
With His finger.

III

Sea is still
Wie God was asleep.
Sometimes he breathes very slow.

WIND

I

Wind hunches his shoulders,
Un shivers behind deck-house.
He would like to be im tropics now.

II

Wind jumps at the luff of sails,
Slides down on his belly
With legs all spread-eagled,
Tumbles off boom,
Un goes round un round companionway—
Like crazy cat shasing his tail.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

III

Wind is lazy stevedore
Which comes along
Un dumps sacks of spices,
Un shuffles away singing,
"Yankee ship came down the river."

MOON

When moon comes up on dark sea
It is wie woman's hair
In mine face.

CAUTIOUS

Im foggy night
Ship goes along
Wie nice girl which is got by mistake
Im sailors' boarding-house
Un sneaks out after dark.

Her dress makesit small slippery noise,
Un boards squeak in rotten floor
From hall-way.

APPARITION

Deck was dark wie inside of cow

[144]

Robert J. Roe

Un she came like Holy Mary
In a light dress.

I wantit then to pray
But could not,
Whatfor I have been sailor too long.

SAILOR

Sometimes I would rather be sailor
Wie king.
Whatfor when all hands sets the courses,
I am not one man
But eight.

BARNEY

Barney is bad watch-mate,
Whatfor I do many times his work
Un hate him for it.

But when I go out on jib-boom
Im squally night
To makeit fast the headsails,
Un sea takes me in his mouth
Up to mine waist
Un spits me out again,
Barney is like angel
Sweating in cold blow.

[145]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

INSIGHT

Im Wellington port I quarrel with Alec
If ship is French or Swede full-rigger.
I get mighty hot,
Un Alec get pretty mad.
Un all of sudden I hear us
Like somebody was cracking straws in mine ear.
Un I let Alec say I am wrong.

JOCK

They ask me why I get drunk,
Un I tell them:
Whatfor when I come im port
I carry all the sea across mine shoulders
Un wouldn't nobody help me;
Only Jock, the bar-man,
Smiles un takes load
Un puts im corner.

When mine money is all gone
Jock gives me back the sea.

STARS

I lie on mine back
Un look at stars—

[146]

Robert J. Roe

So bright, so thick,
Sailing like Portugee men-o'-wars;
Un I ask myself how many stars can be
Un how far.

But I am only one little man
On one little ship
Sailing ninety days to one port,
Un I think I am mighty big business.

Stars ain't Portugee men-o'-wars.

MEINSELF

Sometimes I say to meinsel,
"I am Michaelis Kerek."
But it don't sound true.

You believe me when I say it—
Whatfor you got to believe it, Bob.
But there is many millions men
What never see me.

What is Michaelis Kerek for them?

Robert J. Roe

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

PROSODY

A RECENT discussion of prosody in *The Freeman* brought so many disputants to the fore, each with a different point of view, as to remind at least one of them of the welter of chaos and confusion in which that so-called science finds itself foundering today. Since poets and scholiasts are so at loggerheads about the fundamental technique of the verse-art practiced by the one group and analyzed by the other, it may be well to remind ourselves of the basic origins of rhythm, and of the history, not of poetry itself, but of the system of laws formulated and developed by grammarians from the study of poetry.

Rhythm is of course a universal principle, the very pulse-beat of life and of all the arts. From the amoeba to man, from the atom to the star, rhythm, or power moving regularly in time-beats, is a recognizable law which all creation must obey. The more closely modern science studies the universe—through microscope, telescope, or the naked eye and brain of man—the more astonishing and magnificent becomes this infinite harmony: an intricate weaving of small patterns within great ones, a march of ordered melody, outreaching human eyes and ears, outracing even that “only reality” the human imagination. The arts are an effort to join in, to weave little imitation patterns, sound little imita-

[148].

tion tunes. Even the static arts must respond with balanced form and color in painting, sculpture, architecture—else their manifestations are temporary and incongruous, part of the perishable scum and waste.

Music and poetry seem to have been among the earliest and most direct human manifestations of the universal rhythmic impulse. At first they were united—lyric rapture instinctively fitted words to melody, as it does still in certain forms of spontaneous folk-song like keening over the dead or other primitive rhapsodies of prayer and praise. But as life became more complex, the two arts separated, developed each its own imaginative and technical expression of the rhythmic instinct. Literature began in the creation of poems too beautiful to be left to chance memories and tongues, and therefore committed to writing. After the passing centuries had heaped up an accumulation of these masterpieces, the analysts took hold of them; and out of the practice of dead poets grammarians began to make rules for poets yet to come.

Thus prosody was born. And thus gradually it developed into a rigid science of verse-structure, a science about as scientific, from the modern point of view, as the astronomy or chemistry of the classic and mediaeval periods. For a brief review of its history one need go no further than Edmund Gosse's article on *Verse* in the *Britannica*. It was Aristoxenus of Tarentum, a grammarian contemporary with Alexander the Great and therefore much later than the golden age of Greek poetry,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

who "first laid down definite laws for prosody as a department of musical art." From his time

The theories of verse tended to release themselves from the theories of music. Rules, often of a highly arbitrary nature, were drawn up by grammarians, who founded their laws on a scholastic study of the ancient poets.

One Hephaestion wrote a manual of Greek metres in the second century A. D., which became an authority in both the Byzantine and the Alexandrian schools, and, printed at last in 1526, carried on his influence into modern languages. Of the elaborate system of classic verse-structure set forth by these and other analysts Mr. Gosse reminds us:

It must not be forgotten that the prosodical terminology of the Greeks, which is often treated by non-poetical writers as something scientific and even sacrosanct, dates from a time when ancient literature had lost all its freshness and impulse, and was exclusively the study of analysts and grammarians.

However, the classic nomenclature—the dactyls, anapaests, spondees, iambs, etc., of Greek and Latin, languages whose syllabic quantities were fairly rigid—was carried over into modern tongues of much more changeable quantities and emphatic stresses. Naturally it has proved a misfit; especially in English it is inaccurate and misleading—a mediaeval remainder strangely anachronistic in this age of scientific research. It has been a hampering influence, and would have been perhaps a destructive one if the poets, most of them, had not preserved either an invincible ignorance or a cold-hearted indifference against

all the wiles of prosodic theory. I know two or three of high distinction who don't know an iamb from a cellar-door, and couldn't scan their poems according to formula to save their necks from the Lord High Executioner.

But this virginal innocence, however desirable in the face of a false prosody, might learn much to its advantage from a prosody as accurate and scientifically complete as the system of musical notation which has so enormously stimulated musical production. As I said in the *Freeman*:

In any inquiry into poetic rhythms, one is seriously handicapped by the inexactness of the old terms. Prosody, regarded as the science of verse-notation, is today about as scientific as pre-Galilean astronomy. Its inherited ancient terms—iambic, trochaic, anapaestic, dactylic, etc.—deserve no better fate than the scrap-heap, after which a modern science of prosody might be built upon sound foundations. Indeed, a beginning has been made. There is quite a bibliography of scientific articles by philologists, chiefly German, on the subject of speech-rhythms and verse-rhythms; and Dr. William Morrison Patterson, formerly of Columbia University, has made a most valuable contribution in his volume, *The Rhythm of Prose*, and in the phonographic researches which led up to it. In reviewing this book in April, 1918, I said:

"I am quite out of sympathy with those sensitive poetic souls who resent this intrusion of science. The truth can do no harm, and in this case it must do incalculable good in the enrichment of our sense of rhythmic values. The poet of the future, discarding the wilful empiricism of the past and proceeding upon exact knowledge, will greatly develop and enrich our language-rhythms just as music-rhythms are being developed and enriched by composers fully educated in their art, who add knowledge and training to that primal impulse of heart and mind which we call genius. The poet hitherto has worked in the dark, or at least in a shadow-land illumined only by his own intuition. Henceforth science will lend her lamp; she will hand him the laws of rhythm just as she hands to the painter the laws of light and color, or to the architect the laws of proportion and stress."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Of course modern investigators, including Mr. Bridges, recognize that even common human speech falls necessarily into what Sievers calls *Sprechtakte*, or speech-bars, rhythm being a universal law which prose must obey as well as poetry. So Mr. Bridges is in accord with the scientists in declaring that "in English accentual measures the natural speech-groupings must be supreme."

Prof. Patterson's researches were interrupted a few years ago, unfortunately, by his resignation from the faculty of Columbia University. At present he is living in old Charleston, where, according to a recent letter, he hopes soon to resume his study of this subject. The work of a progressive scientific mind in this much-befogged specialty cannot fail to be illuminating. H. M.

REVIEWS

CHARLOTTE MEW

Saturday Market, by Charlotte Mew. Macmillan Co.

A slim book of verse laden with so much observation, knowledge, passion, sentiment, that it is like an apple-tree burdened by the excess of its own beauty. Almost each poem has the material in it for innumerable poems, and almost each poem is weighed down with words. Yet though Miss Mew lacks simplicity, she never lacks interest. I think, in fact, that this book would appeal to a larger audience than any book of verse published in the past two years, with the possible exception of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Second April*; because the poems tell stories,

[152]

and tell them with genuine dramatic feeling. For instance, *The Farmer's Bride*:

Three summers since I chose a maid,
Too young maybe—but more's to do
At harvest-time than bide and woo.
When us was wed she turned afraid
Of love and me and all things human;
Like the shut of a winter's day.
Her smile went out, and 'twasn't a woman—
More like a little frightened fay.
One night, in the fall, she runned away.

"Out 'mong the sheep her be," they said—
Should properly have been abed.
But sure enough she wasn't there,
Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
So over seven-acre field and up-along across the down
We chased her flying like a hare
Before our lanterns. To Church-town
All in a shiver and a scare
We caught her, fetched her home at last,
And turned the key upon her fast.

She does the work about the house
As well as most, but like a mouse;
Happy enough to chat and play
With birds and rabbits and such as they,
So long as men-folk keep away.
"Not here, not here!" her eyes beseech
When one of us comes within reach.
The women say that beasts in stall
Look round like children at her call.
I'œ hardly heard her speak at all.

Shy as a leveret, swift as he,
Straight and alight as a young larch tree,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Sweet as the first wild violets, she,
To her wild self. But what to me?

The short days shorten and the oaks are brown,
The blue smoke rises to the low grey sky,
One leaf in the still air falls slowly down,
A magpie's spotted feathers lie
On the black earth spread white with rime,
The berries redden up to Christmas time.
What's Christmas time without there be
Some other in the house than we!

She sleeps up in the attic there
Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
Betwixt us. O my God! the down,
The soft young down of her, the brown,
The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!

The above, I think, shows Miss Mew at her best. She has taken one idea and has handled it with restraint. In the longer poems, such as *Madeleine in Church* and *The Quiet House*, she is in danger of becoming melodramatic and verbose. And frequently she loses all sense of word-sound, as in the cacophonous ending of this stanza:

Red is the strangest pain to bear:
In spring the leaves on the budding trees;
In summer the roses are worse than these,
More terrible than they are sweet—
A rose can stab you across the street
Deeper than any knife.
And the crimson haunts you everywhere—
Thin shafts of sunlight, like the ghosts of reddened swords, have
struck our stair,
As if, coming down, you had split your life.

The final lines are as unpleasant to the ear as a finger-

Charlotte Mew

nail drawn across a blackboard; particularly as they follow lines of accurate beauty.

Almost all of the poems are objective, which, in itself, is refreshing in this age when so many poets emphasize the diminutive flutterings of their colossal ego. And the fact that Miss Mew successfully subordinates her own personality to that of the characters in her poems proves her a mature artist. There is nothing slap-dash about her, nothing young—her sophistication has mellowed to wisdom. And when she does not try to impart too much of her knowledge, we are exalted by it:

Tide be runnin' the great world over:
T'was only last June month I mind than we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.
Here's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,
Wi' the moon's old glim on the grey wet sand;
An' him no more to me nor me to him
Than the wind goin' over my hand.

Marion Strobel

A SPIRIT OF QUEST

Explorations, by Robert McAlmon. Egoist Press, London.

If poetry is an easily understood, self-fulfilling bead-string of so-called beautiful images that he who runs may read; if it implies not a continual rebellion to standardized beauty; if it should be simple and naive; then this bitter burning caustic stuff, the broken rhythm of it, the labyrinthine sophistication of it, have nothing to do with

[155]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Pegasus. The old venerable horse would lose his head in it and get his hoofs scorched. McAlmon seeks—it is hard to say just what he seeks; there is a spirit of quest in this book. We might call it the struggle of the poet versus his own sophistication. For that he is a poet some lines tell even to the skeptical:

Between sunrise and sunrise any life is left pendulating.
What if a few stars are stitched
To the hem of the garment one cannot throw off—
The sky one cannot look far into?

and

I have been a vermilion geyser breaking into petals of hot mist that
freeze to crack, clink ing on the too thin-ringing glass of silence.

The very spirit of quest and struggle is in this book and it is that which makes McAlmon say:

Wind, wear yourself to stillness, to death—do not listen to the careful
ones. Do not subside. You inevitably shall be made to, but
never degrade yourself with ingratiation.

These are essentials to that spirit which prompted Prometheus' theft—the poetic spirit.

The tedium and the nausea of sophistication, with the struggle thereof, are emphasized in this slim book. Yet McAlmon is sometimes simple and direct. Witness his book of short stories and "momentary" essays—thus he calls them—*A Hasty Bunch*: stories which are plotless, unfinished and sketchy, but always honest, always interesting and often very free; with a dark sullen trend of fatalism running through them. What is best in *Explora-*

A Spirit of Quest

tions, *The Via Dolorosa of Art* (a beautiful title!), is a rather simple song of the mood that precedes artistic conception; indeed it is rather adolescent, taking the word not to mean derogation but a rather charming insecurity and transparency. The same could be said of *Mood Decisions* and *Prose Sketches*, which are, like the face of the artist of *Via Dolorosa*, "sullen with youth," often boisterous and sometimes bombastic. In striking contrast these are with some other poems which sound like—did you ever hear a vaudeville actor string a lot of high-sounding nonsense words? In the *Via Dolorosa* there is perhaps too much nomenclature, and nomenclature means a vain effort at conception. McAlmon makes an impression. It may be unpleasant—it all depends: a youth, agile and attractive, passing by without taking his hat off to anybody.

Emanuel Carnevali

A PROMISE

The Golden Darkness, by Oscar Williams. Yale University Press. *In Gossamer Grey*, by Oscar Williams. The Bookfellows, Chicago.

The ghost of tradition no longer walks, insinuating repetition; conventionalities of form have been cast aside as snares and delusions. Yet anarchy also is being ruled out—it has begun to be remembered that discipline is one of the duties of the artist, for of what virtue the title "artist" if selection and organization are to be left to

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the public? The new generation of poets, studying the French symbolists, going to school in technique to William Butler Yeats, H. D., and Wallace Stevens; infusing a new flexibility into old forms with Edna Millay—the new generation has done with the inchoate. Perfection has again become the grail: subtlety is demanded of rhythm and rhyme, and profundity of observation. One says what one has to say and ends. Above all, no digression or elaboration for the sake of the mechanics.

Oscar Williams, however, is no disciplinarian. His is a gift-horse into whose mouth he has not looked. He has taken it, been duly grateful, cherished it, and spared it heavy burdens.

Nature, naïvely as in primitive religions, is his protagonist. She is his lady, and he is her troubadour. In a rhythm subtle only by instinct, in facile rhyme, in image and execution varying from the painfully beautiful to the painfully mediocre, he sings without affectation and in a single strain like a bird. The beauties of dawn, of stars, of the palpable dusk of twilight, and the palpable darkness of night, prick him like needles, urging him to his single-noted song, and his gyrations, as of a dancing dervish, ever and ever around in the same spot. One is aware, however, above all, of an authentic urge, aware that Oscar Williams is a poet and no mistake. In spite of an endless repetition of grandiloquent abstractions—mystery, darkness, vastness, strangeness, grandeur, glamour—in spite of banal rhythm and rhyme, one realizes that when

A Promise

Oscar Williams arrives at the maturity promised by the isolated lines quoted below, he will be a far better poet than he is now.

One does not demand great depth of thought of one's lyrists. We shall be satisfied if Oscar Williams but plucks consistently:

And far away the poised gray mountains,
Like billows caught in a trance.

The tears within the twilight's eyes.

Fantasy is lithe like a hound.

And he compares the emergence of the earth at dawn to "a clenched fist, knuckled with crags."

The Golden Darkness (*In Gossamer Gray* is in effect supplementary) is a promise and not a fulfilment. The young poet has just awakened; he stands before life rubbing the mist from his eyes. He has experienced little. He has not yet begun to sing of love, that primal theme of lyrists. Life hides behind a fog, secretive, illusory. When he has done rubbing his eyes, he may come into that clarity of vision one demands of good creative work, no matter how subjective or how mystical. At present he is a novitiate who has taken his first vows.

Ruminations is perhaps the poem that offers most in quotation:

"So," I said, "I am feeling
What I shall always feel—
The sharp toe of a stone,
And a shadow's heel."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"So," I said, "I am seeing
What I shall always see—
The snow blossoms of moonlight
Blowing on a tree."

"So," I said, "I am hearing
What I shall always hear—
The winds with hair of starlight
Crying wild and clear."

"So," I said, "I glory in
What shall always be mine—
The flowers flushing red
In the sky's blue wine."

"So," I said, "I am living
What I may not be—
A dusty masterpiece,
A mouldy biography."

Pearl Andelson

SLIGHT SONGS

Songs from the Journey, by Wilton Agnew Barrett. Geo.
H. Doran Co.

Unfortunately for Mr. Barrett, one feels an almost irresistible impulse to review the publisher's blurb upon the slip-cover of this volume rather than the relatively unimaginative poems which the volume contains. The advertising agent who could speak of these frail and somewhat crudely made vessels for an evident sincerity and almost painful earnestness as the "strange songs vibrant with passion" of a poet "humanly great, yet clear of eye for the little things" (why "yet," we wonder?) deserves individual attention. It is a pity that the

blurb is so conspicuously placed as to demand a reading, since it gives a distorted idea of the poems within.

These are the work of a poet, seemingly young or inexperienced, who sings without much originality of how youth intoxicates itself with the sights and sounds of the city at dusk or refreshes itself under the country pines. Mr. Barrett pauses to pay appropriate tribute to Francis Thompson, to A. E. Housman, to Stephen Phillips; and his work gives back now and then a faint echo of the two last-named poets, and even of Alfred Noyes. His verse lacks the smoothness that one expects from an admirer of Housman, however. One observes a gift for inept metaphor: "a bouquet of young clouds," "the scarf of evening sea flows far adown the grassy beach," "Trees with fretted stars In their lacy hair"; and a disregard for the assonances of English speech, which leads him into such phrases as "the love-loveliness of leaves." Nor has he any great respect for the *mot juste*: here are adjectives of almost inconceivable clumsiness—"unbefrenzied laughter"; adjectives long since threadbare—"impenetrable, obliterating years"; and adjectives that set one's teeth on edge—"his cozy spouse."

Yet in spite of these defects, most of which are due to immaturity and are therefore excusable in a first book; the poems have the charm of sincerity and of a sympathetic vision. We feel this particularly in *The Valley of the Shadow*, *That Night I Danced*, *The House*, and *A*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Dead Man. Some of his pictures are skilfully constructed, even if unmagical; there is vividness in *Miriam*—a white birch in a pine forest—and in his portrayal of tanagers in a city square,

Where toiling Adam stops to watch,
Tired Eve forgets her apple.

Mr. Barrett says somewhere "I am looking for stars"; and in that voicing of his determined search he has revealed his worst trespasses against poetry—self-consciousness and straining after effect. Are not stars most exquisitely and most beautifully reflected from pools of waiting water?

Muna Lee

A JAPANESE COSMOPOLITE

Seen and Unseen: or Monologues of a Homeless Snail, by Yone Noguchi. (New ed.) Orientalia, New York. *Selected Poems of Yone Noguchi*, selected by himself. The Four Seas Co.

With the publication of *Seen and Unseen* in 1898, in San Francisco, Yone Noguchi came into being, and with him came a new tide of oriental influence into our literature. Ethical teachings, philosophy of life manufactured by human intellect, and long narrative stories were entirely absent from his poems. He wrote as he felt—this is the essence of oriental poetry. While the West was busy preaching to the people through its poetry, the East discarded intellectual discussions and

A Japanese Cosmopolite

devoted itself to creating mood; if philosophy entered at all, it was the result of the poet's feeling and not of his intellect. Although the poems in *Seen and Unseen* were a little nebulous and undefined, they were the first poetry of an oriental expressed in English.

Reading through selections from *Voice of the Valley* we find this passage, in *Song of Day in Yosemite Valley*:

The shout of hell wedded to the silence of heaven completes the valley concert.

To feel that strange silence of the mountains and the sky in the roar of the fall is typically Japanese. To feel and create this poetic silence, and through it to suggest the roar, the power, and the majesty of the fall without describing it, is the mission of Japanese poets. And if such a poem is successfully written it has infinitely stronger expression, at least to a Japanese, than hundreds of adjectives piled upon each other by western poets. Yone felt this silence, and had he been completely a Japanese poet, he would have centered his effort in the creation of the silence, instead of in describing the sublimity of the fall as he did in the opening of this poem: "O thunderous opening of the unseen gate!"

But this is not a Japanese poem. Yone felt the mood of Japanese poetry, and expressed it to a certain degree through the western medium. Should western readers discover that strange silence in his poetry, his mission will be fulfilled. Whether they do or not, time alone will tell. The so-called oriental influence in western

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

literature today, I am afraid, is taking the form it has assumed in the other arts, which, to a great extent, have adopted the carcass of Japanese pictures and missed the essence. In this respect Yone's *Japanese Hokkus*, published in 1920, is misleading. For example:

Speak not again, Voice;
The silence washes off sins.
Come not again, Light.

This is written in a hokku form, seventeen syllables in three lines. But the form does not make a hokku. Some of the best hokkus are written without this form. Where is that fine and illusive mood, big enough to illuminate the infinity of the universe, which is essential to the hokku? I cannot find it. This verse may be poetic, but perhaps it should have more words, more lines, and stronger expression. The hokku is not condensed milk; condensed milk never becomes cream. Most of Yone's hokkus sound almost like those of Amy Lowell, which miss the essential quality of the type. Miss Lowell is of course ignorant of Japanese, but Yone has no such excuse.

The free verse of today has moved far away from the example which Yone set during the nineties; but it owes something to him; it acknowledges frankly enough the oriental influence.

Jun Fujita

DANTE IN ENGLISH RHYME

The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri (line for line translation), by Melville Best Anderson. World Book Co., New York.

No translation of *The Divine Comedy* can be altogether acceptable unless in rhyme. Prose, however faithful, is wholly inadequate; blank verse, however skilful, is not much better. And the rhyme ought to be (titanic achievement!) the *terza rima* of the original—that endless chain which *imposes* poetry upon those pedestrian passages that occur even in Dante.

Furthermore, no version of the *Comedy*, not even the original, is fully intelligible and effective without notes. These need not be detailed, nor need they busy themselves over minor points; but they must be present for the sake of a broad and general guidance through the intricacies of Dante's great conception and the labyrinth of an erudition which drew upon all the learning of the time. And if these notes be marginal, rather than at the bottom of the page or at the end of the volume, their usefulness is increased threefold.

These requirements are met in the newest translation of the *Comedy*—that of Dr. Melville B. Anderson, now presented after twenty years of labor. This translation is in the triple rhyme of the original, and is practically line for line. Dr. Anderson has favored the strong, simple, direct words of our English speech, with scant dependence upon Latinized “limbs and outward flour-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ishes." Though the employment of *terza rima* was discouraged by such a Dante scholar as Charles Eliot Norton, its use here may be pronounced highly successful. The rhyme-scheme is maintained with considerable taste and skill throughout, and many lines equal the concision and impressiveness of the original ones, with no loss of poetic quality.

The nub of the *Comedy* is the thirtieth canto of the *Purgatorio*, with the appearance of Beatrice in the car; and the climax of the work is the Beatific Vision, in the last canto of the *Paradiso*. Brief excerpts will show Dr. Anderson's treatment of these crucial passages.

"Blessed be thou that comest!" cried that band,
Filling the air with flowers along the way;
"O give ye lilies all with liberal hand!"—

is assuredly a satisfactory equivalent for—

Tutti dicean: "*Benedictus qui venis,*"
e fior gittando di sopra e dintorno:
"*Manibus o date lilia plenius!*"—

and is none the worse for being in one language.

With Hallelujah on requickened tongue

is a noble equivalent for—

la rivestita voce alleluando;

and

Angels and ministers of life eterne

stands effectively for—

ministri e messaggier di vita eterna,

[166]

Dante in English Rhyme

unless a stress, perhaps undue, be laid on the fact that "ministers," scripturally, form but one of the general order of "angels."

In the Beatific Vision of the Trinity, the translator employs hendacasyllables—speaking roughly, our so-called "weak ending." This is of course in high conformity with the scheme of the original—I believe there are but six ten-syllable lines in the entire *Comedy*:

To me within the luminous deep being
Of Lofty Light appeared three circles, showing
Three colors, and in magnitude agreeing;
And from the First appeared the Second flowing
Like Iris out of Iris, and the Third
Seemed fire that equally from both is glowing.

Truly, in English, the eleven-syllable line leans heavily on the present participle.

Immediately afterward comes a passage in which the line-for-line principle is set aside.

O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
ed intendente te ami e arridi!

becomes:

O Light Eterne, who dost thyself include,
Who lovest, smiling at thy own intents,
Self-understanding and self-understood!—

a departure which is more than justified by the splendid success of the concluding line.

The notes, as I have indicated, are placed where they do the most service; and they often have a touch of un-

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

conventionality and informality which makes them not only serviceable but enjoyable. For minor detailed points the translator refers us, properly enough, to well-known and easily accessible handbooks.

In make-up the volume is handsome and intelligent. Cover, jacket, and the few illustrations are highly apropos. However, the number of the canto might have shown in the running heads; and it would have done no harm if the lines themselves had been numbered by the usual threes or fives.

On the whole, a great achievement. Possessing Scartazzini in Italian and Anderson in English, one is well equipped; indeed, other editions and versions might even be dispensed with.

Henry B. Fuller

CORRESPONDENCE

A WORD FROM MR. UNTERMEYER

To the Editor: The few of us who have been worried about the sometimes monotonous heresies of POETRY's younger critics are grateful for the catholicity exhibited in your May number. The magazine threatens to become what it used to be: an adventure in excitement. Where else in one journal, I wonder, could one hope to find so scornful an attack on feminist poetry as Yvor Winters' querulous review of Anna Wickham's book, and so

incongruous a defense of the jingle of chronic optimism as Gamaliel Bradford's laudation of "Eddie" Guest?

Because of a personal thrust in the first review, I am appending an expostulation to these congratulatory sentences. Thus Mr. Winters, beginning his review of *The Contemplative Quarry*:

"The most casual reading—if such a thing were possible—of Mrs. Wickham's work reveals the strength of her candor, the intense singleness of her purpose," writes Mr. Untermeyer in an introduction that makes one admire the shrewdness of the gentlemen who chose him for his task. And, without wishing to disagree, the hesitant reader may be permitted to wonder what candor and purpose may have to do with art.

The spectacle of an author championing his publishers is so rare that I take a double pleasure in asking Mr. Winters, as courteously as possible, what secret agents led him to believe that Harcourt, Brace and Co. "chose" me to introduce Mrs. Wickham to the American public? The truth is exactly the opposite; for better or for worse, I "chose" them. For many years an enthusiastic reader of Mrs. Wickham's work as it appeared in England, I suggested and prepared a condensed edition of two of her books, offering, brashly and with malice prepense, to supply an appreciatory foreword which I had written for *The New Republic*. Mr. Winters, in all fairness, should attribute to the "gentlemen" who publish no more "shrewdness" than they actually possess.

But my chief quarrel with your reviewer is based on his second sentence. Mr. Winters is a poet, and he is sensitive enough to know that art, like beauty, is not a

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

thing but a relation. And yet he writes about it as dogmatically as though he were using a sacrosanct capital A, as if art were a static property or a fixed form which one could violate as easily as breaking a vase or dropping the fourteenth line of the sonnet. The term itself tends increasingly to such confused thought and cloudy writing that I would like to see an insurgent movement which had for one of its objects the elimination from the language of certain words. I refer particularly to the tag-ends of literary jargon which have become as full of contradictions and as empty of meaning as: *Art, Beauty, Magic, Rhetoric, Design, Lyric*, etc. Mr. Winters should remember, what he undoubtedly knows, that the desire to write definitely of definite things (if Mr. Cabell will pardon the realistic paraphrase) is as much a province of "art" as the most subtle interweaving of *nuance* and overtone. And for such creation, "candor" and "purpose" are not wholly negligible.

Louis Untermeyer

Note by the Editor: It is hardly necessary to remind Mr. Untermeyer that the editors are not responsible for opinions printed in our correspondence section. That is partly a protest department, and even Mr. Guest may find a defender there.

Reviews are a different matter. If the editor were to permit only her own exact opinions to be expressed in reviews, she would needs write them all herself. In a general way she endeavors to print reviews which agree, on the whole, with the feeling and attitude toward the art which the magazine seeks to encourage. The reviewer's ardor may sometimes carry him too far, but to insist on meticulous modifications might destroy all ardor.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

To the Editor: Many of my friends and myself were interested in the editorial in your southern number entitled *Poetry South*. The treatment of southern literature seemed to center chiefly about the southeastern states, but as passing mention was made of certain Kentuckians, we wish to call your attention to the omission of the name of the poet-painter, Robert Burns Wilson.

To any Kentuckian, it is almost anathema that our greatly beloved and distinguished poet should be missed from any discussion of southern letters; and I venture to say that in the coming revival of interest in southern literature, his name will be prominent. The contemporary and friend of Madison Cawein, James Lane Allen, Henry Watterson, James Whitcomb Reilly, Richard Watson Gilder and a host of other American men of letters, there is hardly an event in the literary history of his time with which he was not connected. Few Americans who went through the Spanish-American War can forget his *Remember the Maine*, and *To a Kentucky Cardinal* the children of the South learn in their readers. In 1909 he received the Memorial Medal for his commemorative poem at the Poe Centenary held at the University of Virginia (his home state—he migrated to Kentucky); and his tribute to Robert E. Lee is immortal. In the cemetery at Frankfort his monument stands side by side with Daniel Boone's, overlooking the Elkhorne River, and his bust is in the State House.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Wilson's name was familiar in the magazines and he left three books of verse: *Life and Love*, *The Shadows of the Trees* and *The Chant of a Woodland Spirit*. Another book is to be published shortly. His daughter has once contributed to your magazine, I believe; her name is Anne Elizabeth Wilson.

A Kentuckian

NOTES

Certain problems of editorial policy may perhaps be confided to our contributors and readers. Of late we have been informed of cases of disappointment and irritation due to our holding accepted poems too long before publication.

This impatience is hardly to be wondered at, but these poets might be still more disappointed if we should refuse their poems merely because we have no immediate room for them. The greatest editorial difficulty we encounter is the temptation to accept more poems than we are able to publish promptly. It seems an injustice to send back a good poem, but delay is the only possible alternative. We cannot enlarge the magazine, as each copy printed, being partly paid for by endowment, already costs more than its retail price; moreover, a monthly sheaf of verse should be discreetly small.

Apparently there is but one thing to do—we must be less hospitable. The editors will be compelled hereafter to draw a more stringent line in the acceptance of poems. We have too much advance material on hand, but the conquest of soft moods may enable us to begin our next volume in October with a cleaner slate. Hereafter we must try to keep the edge of resolution sharp, even at the risk of errors of exclusion.

We deeply regret to announce the recent death, in Portland, Oregon, of Joseph Andrew Galahad, whose poem, *A Mood*, appears in this number.

For years this poet has fought gallantly his deadly enemy—tuberculosis. In his last letter to the editor, written February 17th, he said:

"I'm much better, and the old dragon has run away for a whole year,

the doctors tell me. I'm going to believe them this trip, and work as no one ever dreamed of working for that year."

His was a heroic spirit, and his death means the loss of a friend whose letters were as warm and personal as a hand-clasp. His poems reflected the spirit of the man; one of the best of them, *Argosy*, which was first printed in the *North American Review*, presented allegorically his own struggle for life and beauty.

Of the poets represented this month, eight have appeared before in POETRY. These are, besides Mr. Galahad, Mr. Isidor Schneider and Mr. Raymond Holden, of New York; Miss Elizabeth Coatsworth, of Pasadena and many other places from China to Buffalo; Kathryn White Ryan (Mrs. Edward R.), of New York; Miss Mary Carolyn Davies, author of *Youth Riding* and other books (Macmillan Co.), whose present New York address will be gratefully received; Mr. David Morton, author of *Ships in Harbor* (G. P. Putnam's Sons); and Mr. John McClure, author of *Airs and Ballads* (Alfred A. Knopf).

The others are new to our readers:

Mr. Osbert Sitwell, author of *Argonaut and Juggernaut*, is a well known young English poet, one of "the three Sitwells"—sister and two brothers—who were first published by B. H. Blackwell, of Oxford, a few years ago.

Mr. Alva N. Turner, who first appeared in Dr. Williams' mimeographed magazine *Contact*, is now living in Mendota, Wis. Mr. Meredith Beyers lives mostly in Chicago; and Helen Russmann (Mrs. Felix R.) in one of its suburbs, Palos Park. Miss Athena McFadden, of Granville, N. Y., is finishing her course at Smith College.

Mr. Robert J. Roe, now living in Hohokus, N. J., "worked as line-man, factory hand, sailor and newspaper hack" before he was twenty, went to the Mexican border with New Jersey militia in 1916, and the next year took up a claim in Arizona. Mr. Roe writes:

"*A Sailor's Note-book* is an attempt to interpret the sailor in terms of his own choosing.

"Michaelis Kerek was my shipmate on a four-masted schooner for a nine-months' trip in the South Pacific. He is Lettish by birth, but by profession he is an alien, a wandering man, at home everywhere and nowhere at ease; in short, a sailor.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"He is unlettered but not uncultured. His poems were spoken to me without his understanding what they were, and without my realization at the time. They were pitched in a key that the sea knows, whispered to me at night in the lantern-lighted fore-castle; confided to me on the fore-castle head when I came to relieve him and he lingered a moment, loath to quit the comfort of a seat on the anchor windlass, the mysterious peace of the hushed water under the forefoot, and the aching lunge of the jib-boom at the stars. I set down what he told me in my journal, and months after my return, on rereading his phrases, I said to myself, 'This is the stuff of which poetry is made.' And I set myself to interpret it.

"I may not have done justice to Michaelis. Surely, if you do not get the impression of a wistful soul longing beyond the possibilities of his intelligence (which is what we all are doing) I shall have failed; but at least I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have done my utmost."

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Odes and Lyrics, by Hartley Burr Alexander. Marshall Jones Co.
Real Property, by Harold Monro. Poetry Bookshop, London.
Melodies and Mountains, by Isabella McLennan McMeekin. Stratford Co.
The Serpent's Head, by Ruth Young. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.
Iron Monger, by S. A. De Witt. Frank Shay, New York.
Down-again Derry, by Walter de la Mare. Henry Holt & Co.
Songs at Anchor, by B. L. Shurtleff. Plimpton Press.
Songs of a Dream, by Alfred James Fritchey. Privately printed, Los Angeles.

Introducing Irony, by Maxwell Bodenheim. Boni & Liveright.
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ANTHOLOGIES:

The Little Book of Society Verse, ed. by Claude M. Fuess and Harold C. Stearns. Houghton Mifflin Co.
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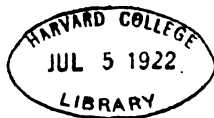
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Vol. XX

No. IV

oetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
July 1922

Pianissimo (A Dialogue)
by Alfred Kreymborg
King Alfred and the
Peasant Woman
by Anna Wickham
In Russia, by Lola Ridge

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Louis Golding

Vol. XX

No. IV

POETRY for JULY, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Pianissimo | <i>Alfred Kreymborg</i> 175 |
| In the Dark City | <i>John Hall Wheelock</i> 187 |
| Notes of Travel | <i>Harriet Monroe</i> 188 |
| On the Train I-III—At O'Neill's Point—In the Yellowstone— Utah—In High Places | |
| The White Moth—The Gentle Housewife | <i>Rosamond Langbridge</i> 194 |
| Full of Laughter | <i>Louis Golding</i> 196 |
| Syncrasy | <i>A. A. Rosenthal</i> 197 |
| King Alfred and the Peasant Woman—A Poet Advises a Change of Clothes | <i>Anna Wickham</i> 198 |
| Prediction | <i>Morris Gilbert</i> 200 |
| In Russia | <i>Lola Ridge</i> 201 |
| The Spilling of the Wine—Snow Dance for the Dead— The White Bird | |
| Shelley | <i>H. M.</i> 206 |
| A New Pulitzer Prize | <i>H. M.</i> 215 |
| Reviews: | |
| Carlos Williams' New Book | <i>Yvor Winters</i> 216 |
| A Sunlit Clearing | <i>Pearl Andelson</i> 220 |
| Tarnished Gold | <i>Agnes Lee Freer</i> 223 |
| Slavic Poetry | <i>Isidor Schneider</i> 228 |
| Notes and Books Received | 233, 234 |

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XX
No. IV

JULY 1922

PIANISSIMO

An Intermezzo

For Bee Knudsen

TWO elderly gentlemen, in clothes even older than themselves, are just sitting down—with the outward aid of crooked canes and the inward support of sighs—on what is presumably a park bench, shaded by mountain laurels, with a swan-pond for a background. The men also carry the venerable pipes of tradition: in this case, heavily crusted corn-cobs. Their speech, very slow and gentle, gives them the sound of impersonal instruments improvising a harmless duo: prosaic music blown into the air at the end of smoke spirals, the re-lighting of pipes necessarily frequent. The only apparent difference between them, traceable perhaps to the unconscious bias of habitual meditation and perpetual comparison of ideas, has reduced itself to a slight wagging of the head on the part of the one as opposed to a slight nodding on

[175]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the part of the other. Speech and movement coincide almost as caressingly as the effect produced by lips brushing wood-instruments.

Henry: Nay, but I insist
that the quick sharp touches the rain
and slower titillation the sun
put upon those flowers we saw
have in them the same heedless passion,
heedless of all save the self,
which envelops unconscious adolescence.
That isn't the type of caress I'm seeking.

Hodge: Those flowers were pale indeed
with a suggestion of pink and beginning of blue!

Henry: Early degrees of coloration
solely indicative of the mood
of self-interest of rain and of sun;
alternately shaping something,
like a left hand and right
of one and the same conjurer
reproducing his own vague image:
the flower somehow a captive,
clay just as we are,
subject to the next modulation
towards the next helpless state of being.
I've had my share and enough
of such no longer magical passes.

Hodge: Nearer to red and closer to purple!

Henry: That is the type of caress
which has made of what I was
the droning instrument I am,
played upon in the one tonality
of a careless self-love so long
that the grave itself
will simply be the final effort
of the same somebody using me
to express himself in a minor cadence—
his little alas but a sigh
that his composition closed so shabbily.

Hodge: And still you cannot recall,
stubborn lad that you are,
a single variation, a dissonance, a brève?

Henry: Neither can you, Hodge,
with your eye pointing forward!

Hodge: Let us try just once more again—

Henry: Folk-song of the hopeful!—

Hodge: And perhaps—

Henry: *Da capo* of the hopeless!

Hodge: Possibly the shade of this laurel,
itself the design of accident,
angle of sun and of tree
meeting, rounding, spreading,
will quiet your melancholy,
and some quaint caress have room to stir,
your memory mislaid?

Henry: Memory is a cupboard

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I have gone to myriad times
and have returned the one time always
with relics so tedious
I find them heavier than boulders.
Since you who persist must try once again,
pray, take down the future if you can.

Hodge: Let us then sit here and wait,
and the strange, the new, may yet transpire.

Henry: You nod your head and I wag mine,
that is the difference between us:
you have verticals left in you,
I am all horizontal.

Hodge: But we are breathed into moving
in accordance with the odd,
delicately reciprocal nuance
of our one and the same—

Henry: Bassoonist!—

Hodge: You dub him lugubriously!—

Henry: Accurately!—

Hodge: Henry!

[Henry looks at Hodge. Hodge smiles. They smoke in silence. Hodge points with his pipe-stem.]

Hodge: That swan,
a white interrogation
embracing the water,
and being embraced in response—

Henry: Their eyes reflecting each other,
their bodies displacing—

Alfred Kreymborg

Hodge: That swallow cleaving the air,
trusting his wings to the waves of ether—

Henry: And the air trusting him
with room in her body,
relinquishing just enough space
for him to fit himself into—

Hodge: Or the worm underground,
digging cylinder channels—

Henry: And the earth undulating
to the pressure of excavation—

Hodge: Caresses like these, simple Henry—

Henry: Caresses like those, simpler Hodge,
have been clapped in my ear
by your credulous tongue
with such affectionate fortitude,
I'm a bell attacked by echoes
each time the sea moves.

*[Hodge looks at Henry and wags his head. Henry nods.
and smiles. Hodge turns away.]*

Henry: You also remind me of evergreens
refusing to acknowledge the seasons,
or unable to distinguish
between white flowers and snow.
You're as old and as young as romance.

Hodge: It's you who fall redundant,
you who fondle the rondo—
why not have done and call me senile?

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Henry: Senility is a sling
invented by cynical youths
who envy and would rob
the old of their possessions.

Hodge: You admit possessions?—
you contradict yourself?—

Henry: My property
comprises the realization,
stripped bare of hope or hypothesis,
that I own neither things nor persons;
least of all these, myself.
Nor am I longer deluded
with even the thought of touching
a body that pirate youth would filch,
who cannot rid his blood of desire.

Hodge: Then you must be that youth,
since you crave—

Henry: A type of caress?

Hodge: How do you wriggle out of that?

[Hodge and Henry relight their pipes.]

Henry: The type of caress I crave
must have in it
no desire to make of me
aught of what it would make of itself.
It must not say to me,
“I would make of you
more of me and less of you—”

Alfred Kreymborg

Hodge: Nor must it lure me,
by virtue of the bounty
of its body or the beauty
of its mind, to sigh,
"I would make of myself
more of you and less of me—"

Henry: I have had enough
of such juxtaposition—

Hodge: The immortal dialogue
of life and of death—

Henry: The recurrent symbol
of being and reflection—

Hodge: Of Narcissus
in love with himself—

Henry: Of God chanting a solo
to comfort His loneliness,
like an aged woman
knitting things for her children to wear
in her own image,
singing: "This is I,
and you are mine;
so wear my love as I love you."

[Pause. Henry lowers his head; so does Hodge.]

Henry: If it is
God who fashioned me,
is it He
who asks, is He pleased?

[181]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Hodge: Does my prayer,
which is His
if I'm His,
move or leave Him unmoved?

Henry: It is He
who lifts these questions,
or am I
to blame for thinking?

Hodge: If He,
noticing me
at last, notices Himself—
what's wrong with Him?

Henry: Really,
I'm not regretting
what I am,
nor begging, make me better.

Hodge: If I
have a sense of the droll,
surely
He has one too.

Henry: Asking Himself
to pray to Himself—
that is,
if He fashioned me?

[*Pause.*]

Hodge: Does it comfort you?

Henry: A little—for a moment.

Alfred Kreymborg

Hodge: Farther than last time?

Henry: A tiny stretch beyond.

[They raise their heads.]

Hodge: It's still a wee mad melody—

Henry: Innocent blasphemy
of the inner
frantic to grow to the outer,
to the more than itself—
the molecule a star,
the instant universal—
the me a trifle closer
to the you that gave it life.

Hodge: You recall how you composed it
years before we came to this?

Henry: As clearly as a brook,
and you sitting in its midst
like a pebble nodding assent
to the foolish reckless sound—

Hodge: Strange that we return to it!

Henry: Stranger still, we do naught but return!

[They continue smoking, Henry wagging, Hodge nodding.]

Hodge: Did you feel something stir?

Henry: Only another breeze—

Hodge: But didn't you see that cloud alter?—

Henry: The cause of the breeze—

[183]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Hodge: Caressing us?—

Henry: Leaving me colder—

Hodge: Me warmer.

Henry: When the temperature in a room
is higher or lower than normal,
it is needful to open
or to shut a window—

Hodge: Which?

Henry: A west wind
urges me to shut a west window,
an east an east—that is all.
And I have known the same touch
to thrill and leave me cold,
and this monotonous heart of mine
to open and close in childish acquiescence—

Hodge: Button your coat about you—

Henry: We have no business
gadding around in the spring—
it was you who suggested it,
you with your nodding.

Hodge: It was the look of the world outdoors—
let us try another place,
or wander back home again.

Henry: And try just once more?

Hodge: Perhaps, providing—

Henry: We are like twin philosophers,
phrase-practitioners
who argue with slender

Alfred Kreymborg

tapering sensitive beards
which each lays persuasive hold of,
pulling first the one the other
and the other the one in turn,
till their heads collide and rebound
back to the starting-point,
with *if* or *suppose* or *providing* or *but*—

Hodge: But you have more wisdom?—

Henry: And you more happiness!
And thus the moon pursues the sun!

[Hodge touches Henry.]

Hodge: Are you angry?

Henry: Angry with you?

[They eye each other, smile faintly, and turn away.]

Henry: Your talk comes to me from afar,
though you are only an elbow away;
like rain making an arid soil
intimate with better things.
They, perhaps, are what are left me.

Hodge: If I say, I love thee,
in some guise or other—
this is more than talk?

Henry: The gesture of a lonely spirit
reaching out to a lonelier.

[They methodically shake out their pipes and stuff them

[185]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

away. Hodge nudges Henry over so gently. Henry tries to rise. Hodge has to aid him. They move away haltingly, Hodge's stick tapping a little in advance of Henry's, and Hodge's arm through Henry's. Henry tries to shake off Hodge, but the latter persists. They move slightly faster.]

Henry: Was it yesterday I said—

Hodge: What, Henry?

Henry: I love thee?

Hodge: In actual words, nay—
but the day before—

Henry: Then let them have been said
yesterday as well,
for if words ever fail me—

Hodge: They never fail you.

Henry: Nor you, Hodge.

[They nod together.]

Henry: Let us go silently
the next pace or two—

Hodge: As you will—

Henry: And let other things speak—

Hodge: For us?

Henry: For themselves.

[They disappear, Hodge's stick still sounding in advance of Henry's.]

Alfred Kreymborg

[186]

IN THE DARK CITY

There is a harper plays
Through the long watches of the lonely night
When, like a cemetery,
Sleeps the dark city, with her millions laid each in his tomb.

I feel it in my dream; but when I wake, . .
Suddenly, like some secret thing not to be overheard,
It ceases—
And the gray night grows dumb.

Only in memory
Linger those veiled adagios, fading, fading . . .
Till, with the morning, they are lost.

What door was opened then?
What worlds undreamed of lie around us in our sleep,
That yet we may not know?
Where is it one sat playing
Over and over, with such high and dreadful peace,
The passion and sorrow of the eternal doom?

John Hall Wheelock

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

NOTES OF TRAVEL

ON THE TRAIN

I

The lady in front of me in the car,
With little red coils close over her ears,
Is talking with her friend;
And the circle of ostrich foam around her hat,
Curving over like a wave,
Trembles with her little windy words.
What is she saying, I wonder,
That her feathers should tremble
And the soft fur of her coat should slip down over her
shoulders?
Has her string of pearls been stolen,
Or maybe her husband?

II

He is drunk, that man—
Drunk as a lord, a lord of the bibulous past.
He shouts wittily from his end of the car to the man in the
corner;
He bows to me with chivalrous apologies.
He philosophizes, plays with the wisdom of the ages,
Flings off his rags,
Displays his naked soul—
Athletic, beautiful, grotesque.

[188]

Harriet Monroe

In the good time coming,
When men drink no more,
Shall we never see a nude soul dancing
Stript and free
In the temple of his god?

III

She comes smiling into the car
With iridescent bubbles of children.
She blooms in the close plush seats
Like a narcissus in a bowl of stones.
She croons to a baby in her lap—
The trees come swinging by to listen,
And the electric lights in the ceiling are stars.

AT O'NEILL'S POINT

Grand Canyon of Arizona

Cardeñas, I salute you!
You, marauding buccaneering Spaniard!
You, ragged and sworded lordling, slashing through to the
Seven Cities of Cibola;
You, athirst in the desert, seeking to drink from the great
river—
The mother of western seas, dear to your Hopi guides!
You, Cardeñas the Spaniard, three centuries before the
next first white man,

[189]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

You with your handful of starvelings stood on this Rim
of the Canyon,
And looked down at flecks of water in the deeps,
Like yellow petals fallen.
You scrambled a few hundred feet down the sheer rock
wall,
And knew you would never drink of that tawny torrent.
You gave it up, and thirsted, and cursed your guides.

And your leader, Coronado the adventurer,
Thought you mad when you told your story—
Mad of thirst in the desert,
Dreaming of loud deep rivers
In demon-haunted caverns.

But I believe you.
Here where I stand you stood—
On the rim of the world.
You saw these sky-wrapt towers,
These terraced purple temples august and terrible.
And over them—over—
You gazed at the Celestial City,
And counted the steps of gods on its ramparts,
And saw the Great White Throne, all pearl and moonstone,
Beyond, through the turquoise gates.

Harriet Monroe

IN THE YELLOWSTONE •

Little pin-prick geysers, spitting and sputtering;
Little foaming geysers, that spatter and cough;
Bubbling geysers, that gurgle out of the calyx of morning-
glory pools;
-Laughing geysers, that dance in the sun, and spread their
robes like lace over the rocks;
Raging geysers, that rush out of hell with a great noise,
and blurt out vast dragon-gulps of steam, and,
finishing, sink back wearily into darkness;
Glad geysers, nymphs of the sun, that rise, slim and nude,
out of the hot dark earth, and stand poised in
beauty a moment, veiling their brows and breasts
in mist;
Winged geysers, spirits of fire, that rise tall and straight
like a sequoia, and plume the sky with foam:
O wild choral fountains, forever singing and seething,
forever boiling in deep places and leaping forth for
bright moments into the air,
How do you like it up here? Why must you go back to
the spirits of darkness? What do you tell them
down there about your little glorious life in the sun?

UTAH

It was a queer country your harsh Lord gave you,
Great Brigham, whom I see coated and curled

[191]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

In bronze before me in the public square!
It was a scraped and shining skeleton,
Gnawed to the bone long since at God's first breakfast
And thrown away to bleach out in the sun.
Yet here He led you—
The Lord and his vicegerent Joseph Smith—
He ordered you
To take the dead earth from His niggard hand
And set His Throne up by the salty sea—
The little bucketful of ocean, poured
Over the desert's feet between the hills.

And so you starved and prayed,
Thirsted and starved and prayed through the lean years,
Keeping the faith, digging your little ditches,
Making the desert blossom as the rose.
You married many wives,
And got you many children to fulfil
The special order whispered in the night
To His apostle by the Lord Himself—
The God of Abraham, of Saul and David,
Of Solomon and other lustful kings.

And here, tithe upon tithe, stone upon stone,
Your saints built up His throne unto the Lord
From plans the angel taught your hand to draw:
His new Solomon's Temple, heaven-remembered,
To rise again here at the western gate,
And prove His glory in these latter days!

[192]

Harriet Monroe

Great Brigham, sleeping now under the desert
With all your wives,
What summary vengeance have you meted out
To that ironic angel?

*He alone builds
Who builds for beauty, shrining his little truth
In stones that make it fair.*

IN HIGH PLACES

My mountains, God has company in heaven—
Crowned saints who sing to him the sun-long day.
He has no need of speech with you—with you,
Dust of his foot-stool! No, but I have need.
Oh, speak to me, for you are mine as well—
Drift of my soul. I built you long ago;
I reared your granite masonry to make
My house of peace, and spread your flowered carpets,
And set your blue-tiled roof, and in your courts
Made musical fountains play. Ah, give me now
Shelter and sustenance and liberty,
That I may mount your sky-assailing towers
And hear the winds communing, and give heed
To the large march of stars, and enter in
The spirit-crowded courts of solitude.

Harriet Monroe

[193]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THE WHITE MOTH

Every night
At my windy, when
I quench the light
Between nine an' ten,

A White Moth
Soars through the trees,
Light as the froth
Blown off of the seas.

At the same time
It flutters, white
In the scented lime—
Every night.

Seems-like it is,
When I draw the blind,
As if the hair riz
Straight off me mind.

For, how do it come
Just to the minute?—
As if it heard some
Clock strikin' in it.

Seems like the spell
Of some Mighty One,
Come for to tell
Of some thing I done!

[194]

Rosamond Langbridge

Seems like a sign
I done him some hurt,
When I whipped from his line
Quilty's white shirt.

Me heart wouldn't crack—
But the spell would break
If I took it back
As a little mistake.

Still . . . I'm no debtor
To a bit of light froth:
Maybe 'twould be better
To crush the White Moth!

THE GENTLE HOUSEWIFE

There's the first white butterfly dancing abroad!
There are wild wind-flowers dotting the sward;
There are wild green breakers combing the bay;
There's a red ferret darting over the way!

But I am chiding the children for being so wild;
I am chiding the nurse for chiding the child;
I am careful to lay down tea-leaves in the hall;
I am gazing at that spot of mildew on the wall—
And my heart is breaking, breaking,
With the hatred of it all!

Rosamond Langbridge

[195]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FULL OF LAUGHTER

Very full of laughter is the old man.
The air is full of wings
Of the little birds of laughter,
Which the old man flings
From his mouth up to the rafter
In the white-washed ceiling
That vibrates with his laughter
And quivers and sings;
Till the little birds come stealing
To the lips whence they came,
And you only hear the laughter
In the shaking of the flame,
In the tapping of the leaves,
And you only hear the laughter
Very faintly if at all;
Until, as you drowse, suddenly, once more,
He awakes with a roar,
And the laughter goes flapping from the ceiling to the wall.
Very full of laughter is the old man.

Very full of laughter is the old man? . . .
I know not what I say,
I mistrust what I hear.
There's an evil tongue licking where the log-fires play,
The round cat heaves with a laughter and a fear.
There are wells lying deeper

[196]

Louis Golding

Than the laughter in his eyes,
There are glooms lying deeper
Than the lost lands of the sleeper,
There are sounds behind the laughter
Which I dare not follow after,
There's a choked heart tolling and a dumb child cries.
There's an old mouth full of laughter,
But a dumb heart cries.

Louis Golding

SYNCRASY

I am a reed
Wind-throated and rain-tuned.
You are the player,
Wise as the world.

What will you blow through me, Softmouth?
What sorrows must I echo
From your honied lips
To learn the sweetness of pain?
What lachrymations must I silver
To learn the bitterness of love?

I am a reed
Waiting and silent.
You are the player,
Searching your heart.

A. A. Rosenthal

[197]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

KING ALFRED AND THE PEASANT WOMAN

Throw me from the house—did he?
Well, to new chivalry that is no great thing!
I am my father's daughter, lady!
And *he's* a pretty figure in the ring.

But my man, my master, there he sat a-dreaming
While all the house might burn and he'd not sorrow;
Nor had I any warrant that his scheming
Would bring us any victory on the morrow.

And I spoke to him! Oh, I informed him!
He'd be a dead man if he were not stung;
Could any man keep hands down, and me lashing?
Friend, you insult my tongue!

I'd rather he fought *me* than missed his combats,
Though I'm not built for blows upon the heart.
Give me a breast-plate, and I'll at 'em,
Though that's fool-woman's part!

I love him; and when he comes back with honor
After the fight I drove him to is won,
He'll find his woman with her glory on her.
Please God, the child's a son!

Anna Wickham

A POET ADVISES A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Why wears my lady a trailing gown,
And the spurious gleam of a stage queen's crown?
Let her leap to a horse, and be off to the down!
Astride, let her ride
For the sake of my pride,
That she is more ancient than Diana—
Ancient as that she-ape who, lurking among trees,
Dropt on a grazing zebra, gript him with her knees
And was off across the breadths of the savannah;
Barking her primal merry deviltry,
Barking in forecast of her son's sovereignty.
My timeless lady is as old as she,
And she is moderner moreover
Than Broadway, or an airship, or than Paris lingerie.

O my eternal dominating dear,
How much less dated thou than Guinevere!
Then for your living lover
Change your gown,
And don your queenship when you doff your crown.

Anna Wickham

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

PREDICTION

In some inimical starry night
When the worthies are abed,
Suddenly will come a flight
Of baleful things about your head.
These will not be simply bats
(These, imponderable as leaves),
These will not be timid gnats—
These will be audacious thieves:

Devils of the midnight's action,
Wrong ones of the twisted spheres,
A fluttering unholy faction
Of Port Havoc mutineers.

In your spirit's corridors
There will, that night, be strange things:
What were dances will be wars,
There will be vain imaginings—
Slaughter and knavery and laughter,
Sights to make a man afraid,
Boozing, cajoling, boasts, and after
(I need not say) you'll be betrayed. . . .

Since the story is so bitter
The quaint world will find its proofs—
What is left of you will flitter
Like a grey cat on the roofs.

Morris Gilbert

IN RUSSIA

THE SPILLING OF THE WINE

The soldiers lie upon the snow,
That no longer gyrates under the spinning lights
Night juggles in her fat black hands.
They will not babble any more secrets to loose-mouthed
 nights
Expanding in golden auras,
While sleigh-bells jingle like new coins the darkness
 shuffles . . .
They will not drink any more wine—
Wine of the Romanoffs,
Jewelled wine
The secret years worked slowly at
Till it was wrought to fire,
As stones are faceted
Until they give out light.
The soldiers lie very still.
Their shadows have shrunk up close
As toads shrink under a stone;
And night and silence,
The ancient cronies,
Foregather above them.

But still over the snow, that is white as a ram's fleece,
Arms swing like scythes . . .

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And shadows in austere lines
Sway in a monstrous and mysterious ritual—
Shadows of the Kronstad sailors
Pouring blood and wine. . .
Wine
Spurting out of flagons in a spray of amethyst and gold,
Creeping in purple sluices;
Wine
And blood in thin bright streams
Besprinkling the immaculate snow;
Blood, high-powered with the heat of old vineyards,
Boring . . . into the cool snow . . .
Blood and wine
Mingling in bright pools
That suck at the lights of Petrograd
As dying eyes
Suck in their last sunset.

The night has a rare savor.
Out of the snow-piles—altar-high and colored as by a
 rosy sacrifice—
Scented vapor
Ascends in a pale incense . . .
Faint astringent perfume
Of blood and wine.

SNOW DANCE FOR THE DEAD

Dance, little children . . . it is holy twilight . . .
Have you hung paper flowers about the necks of the ikons?
Dance soft . . . but very gaily . . . on tip-toes like the
snow.

Spread your little pinafores
And courtesy as the snow does . . .
The snow that bends this way and that
In silent salutation.
Do not wait to warm your hands about the fires.
Do not mind the rough licking of the wind.
Dance forth into the shaggy night that shakes itself upon
you.

Dance beneath the Kremlin towers—golden
In the royal
Purple of the sky—
But not there where the light is strongest . . .
Bright hair is dazzling in the light.
Dance in the dim violet places
Where the snow throws out a faint lustre
Like the lustre of dead faces . . .
Snow downier than wild-geese feathers . . .
Enough filling for five hundred pillows . . .
By the long deep trench of the dead.

Bend, little children,
To the rhythm of the snow

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

That undulates this way and that
In silver spirals.
Cup your hands like tiny chalices . . .
Let the flakes fill up the rosy
Hollows of your palms
And alight upon your hair,
Like kisses that cling softly
A moment and let go . . .
Like many kisses falling altogether . . .
Quick . . . cool kisses.

THE WHITE BIRD

Man of the flame-eyes
And mouth with the bitter twist of in-grown laughter,
And little bald man . . . whose seeming stillness
Is akin to the velocity of a spinning star
Holding its perfect poise—
You two yea-sayers
Beetling over the little deniers,
Two great levelers, building from the earth up, among
 puttiers and pluggers of rotten piles—
You of the rich life, running in ample measure, amidst
 life deleted of its old raw fire as earth is deleted
 of its coal and iron—
You be mighty hunters and keepers,
Trotsky and Lenine—

[204]

Lola Ridge

Yet can you hold . . . the unconstrainable One
Of the slow and flaming deaths
And multiple resurrections?

Hands, reaching in hundreds of millions,
Backs, straightening under the keeling floor of the world,
Can you hold the great white bird?—
She that sweeps low over the chain-gangs
When they glance up from their stone-breaking
Into morning's burning gold;
She that goes down into underground cells,
Sending the cool wind of her wings
Through unsevering stone . . .
And departs, unbeknown, from those who announce her,
Saying: "Lo, she is ours!"

Ah, what a mighty destiny shall be yours,
Should you persuade her—
The Unconstrainable One
Who has slid out of the arms of so many lovers,
Leaving not a feather in their hands!

Lola Ridge

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

SHELLEY

IN these days of revolutionary changes it is appropriate to be reminded of Shelley by the centenary of his death; and the reminder may well lead us to a deeper study of the man and his work than a casual reading of *The Cloud* and *The Skylark*. For of all the ranking English poets, Shelley was preëminently the poet with a message—a type somewhat decried by modern esthetic theorists, who would not permit the muse to stiffen her lips with didactic emphasis. Even Milton, the Puritan partisan of Cromwell, pleader for free speech, free thought, free divorce and other heresies, was a conservative conformist beside Shelley, whose stark idealism accepted no compromise, whose ardor for a complete revolution in human society would have been, like Lenin's, "the same in act as in desire" if he also could have faced the tragic ironies of fate by achieving political power.

Of course we have only the beginning of Shelley's thinking, for he was under thirty, and young for his age, when he died. Yet there is a kind of finality about it, for he seems youth incarnate, youth immortal, and perhaps, as with the great mystics among whom Mr. Yeats classes him, old age with him would have been but a diviner childhood. Aflame with reformatory zeal, he theorized with complete conviction; and his theoretic picture of a perfect world was as untroubled by common sense as a

cubistic painting, and as unaffected by the humane perspectives of humor. He had youth's singlemindedness, single-sightedness; perceiving a vivid truth, he struck out toward it through all obstacles, no matter how many conventions, laws, or even human hearts were broken on the way; only to be deflected from the immediate goal by the more flaming ardor of a newer revelation.

His creed was essentially Godwin touched by emotion, eighteenth-century radicalism transfigured by a poet's dreams. Freedom, sacrosanct and glorified, 'was its cardinal principle: evil is an accident; could man always have been free he would never have wandered from virtue—"government is but the badge of his degradation." Lift from his past history the incubus of the law, with its consequences of obedience, "fear, faith and slavery"; grant him through all his course freedom of thought, of action and of love, and man's career would have been one long millennium of universal justice. And now this long-delayed peace on earth must be invoked on the instant by chosen souls. Live out your life, fulfil all natural impulses so long as your heart is pure, restrain neither thought nor deed, and "neither change nor falter nor repent"—such was the counsel of perfection which his impulsive "practicalness" urged upon his puny neighbors and flaunted brightly in the face of the canting world. He had no time to wait or think. If his intellect built too slowly, his imagination lightly overleapt logic and perched upon cloudy ramparts for a sunrise song.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The lyrics by which he is chiefly remembered were mere tangents from the rounding circle of his message—he would rather have destroyed them, probably, than let his fame rest upon such slight sparks of personal emotion, such flashes of joy or love or despair, thrown off casually while, from *Queen Mab* to *The Triumph of Life*, he was summoning to action the hosts of a happier world. The language of his summons was clear. In *The Masque of Anarchy* and certain more directly political poems of anathema his faith in the power of the human soul utters a command to the proletariat of his time:

Rise, like lions after slumber,
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you.
Ye are many—they are few.

In *Prometheus Unbound* this faith becomes an assertion of man's ultimate supremacy, when "the painted veil . . . called life . . . is torn aside":

The man remains—
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man:
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless;
Exempt from awe, worship, degree; the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise—but man.
Passionless?—no; yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them;
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance and death and mutability—
The clogs of that which yet might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

[208]

With a zealot's precision Shelley demanded the absolute. His was a religious spirit, always fascinated by the supernatural, seeking communion with an impalpable divine essence. Therefore, in spite of the buffetings of fate, he stands for the revelation to men of ineffable spiritual realities beyond the reach of sensuous experience. His soul flamed upward like Blake's, though with less detachment. He explored the empyrean, he touched the intangible; his poetry brought down to earth the vision of supernal beauty which had eluded even the blind eyes of Milton. Through him the vitality of mystical abstractions, the power and sweep of subtle unseen forces, the loveliness of secret beauty, the glory of naked truth, and the upward reach of the human mind toward the infinite splendor, are given the fiery proof of song. On earth he was ill at ease; in the highest heaven of imagination his poise was perfect. He never wavered in his flight, never stooped to catch the popular ear, never degraded for the sake of transient rewards a mission which seemed to him the holiest of all confided to mortal man. For poetry he held to be the noblest and most universal of the arts by which truth is made manifest to men, language being "as a mirror which reflects," and the materials of other arts "as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums."

One is tempted to quote whole pages of his magnificent *Defence of Poetry* in this connection, an essay which makes a royal progress through the universe, and shows that the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

spirit of poetry is the manifestation of the eternal order and harmony, the vitalizing and regenerating principle, the exemplar of wisdom and the revealer of love, the soul of aspiration, "the echo of the eternal music"; the destroyer, too, of wrong—a "sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it." As an art, "poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man," being "the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." He defends these happiest and best minds, who "make immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world," from the charges the world has brought against their lives; insisting that their frailties are merely the rebound of what is animal and passionate in their nature from a spiritual exaltation they experience and express but do not understand.

Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; . . . the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

He at least would be true to his high office. He would illumine a path for men's hopes to travel even though they mocked him. The glorious vision of an exalted destiny for his race was before him, and in the fit disclosure of that vision he felt secure of immortal influence, even though the world rejected him in life. And the world did reject him. He threw down the gauntlet and his country took

it up. His name was the synonym for unspeakable crimes, his poems were a target for the wrath and ridicule of reviewers, their small editions lay unsold with his publisher, and his sympathetic readers could be counted on the fingers of one hand. It was long after his death that the song of "the nightingale who sat in darkness" began to penetrate to men's ears.

For in form, as well as in feeling, Shelley was a revolutionist, and therefore unwelcome. English poetry was but newly awake from its eighteenth-century trance. Coleridge, Burns and the quiet Wordsworth had brushed away forever those reams of rhymed eloquence with which Pope and his kind had smothered the goddess; but the world was as yet scarcely aware of it, preferring the old heroics. Though Byron was forcing down its throat his modern message, Shelley and Keats were still exotics—outlandish birds singing a wild strain. Perhaps Shelley himself scarcely realized how different his style was from all that had been so long in vogue. Like every true poet, he had an instinct for form; and it was probably by instinct, rather than deliberate intention, that he followed Coleridge in breaking the long reign of the iambic measure, that he played with anapaests and trochees, and surpassed in delicate complexity of rhythm even the gay Elizabethans. For the expression of modern subtleties he added more strings to their instrument, and passed it on to us enriched with new notes and capable of a broader range.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Beauty, love and freedom are the triune chord at the basis of Shelley's song. We hear it again and again, like the Holy Grail motive in *Parsifal*. *Prometheus Unbound* is the spirit of freedom, braving omnipotent tyranny for love of the human race, who still declares, after aeons of agony:

I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The savior and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulf of things—

and at whose release and reunion with Nature, when Eternity has conquered the evil principle of Power, all earth and her children rejoice in the ecstasy of inextinguishable love and holiness and peace. Shelley is at home in the heaven of heavens; the *Prometheus* soars like livid flame, and its choruses reach a celestial height of lyric exaltation. Whether spirits or echoes or furies speak, they speak with eternity behind and before them, reveal to us birthless and deathless minds.

Prometheus and *Adonais* and the lyrics are the best of Shelley; for in most of the longer poems, as even occasionally in these, he does not escape grandiloquence. With Coleridge and Burns and Keats he restored the lost Elizabethan tradition, resumed the grand manner, even though his one deliberately Elizabethan experiment was a failure. It is curious that this radical could not carry his radicalism into the theatre. *The Cenci* is an imitative dramatic essay rather than a drama, an experiment in the Elizabethan manner modified by classic austerities. It

out-Websters Webster in horrors, but misses Webster's vitality; its characters are premeditated types rather than suffering men and women.

Shelley met the world of men and women with the solemn, unquestioning belief of some flower or child, and when things proved not what they seemed he thought they must be the exact reverse. The strength of the recoil was the natural result of the violent eagerness of the attack, and it was all a part of his passionate youthfulness. For not only the glories of youth but its weaknesses were his—its irreverence, its fiery impatience, its haughty intolerance of the work-a-day world, its reckless daring in the first onset flagging under prolonged effort. Thus it is by his upward reach more than his capacity for sustained flight that Shelley wins his place among the masters. For this reason his lyrics are the most typical expression of his genius. These are the record of his ardent emotionalism; each one comes fresh from a burning mood. There is no time for inconstancy, for the dulling of the fine edge of inspiration, such as makes even the *Prometheus* strongest in its first act, a thing which can not be said of a faultless work of art.

If he had lived to be old the record might be different. But as yet his thinking had not passed through youth's sense of dissonance and unreality. When he died he was still aloof from life: "As to real flesh and blood," he said, "you know I do not deal in those articles;" and he called himself "the knight of the shield of shadow and the lance

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

of gossamere." Humanity disappointed him, and even the momentary joy of dreams brought despair in its wake. It was because of the very ardor of his ecstasies that life was for Shelley a series of disillusion. One after another the raptures of his youth went out, and his path grew darker and more lonely to the end. He died at a crucial point in his development, when everything seemed to be falling away from him, when the struggle with despondency was tempting him to suicide, "that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest." If he had lived longer he must either have withdrawn more and more from actualities or have emerged into a more mature and humane wisdom.

But we need not quarrel with his fate, or lament that his eager, restless, baffled spirit found swift repose in death. Life could scarcely have satisfied him—in the very exaltation of his purpose lay its doom. As it is, we may recognize in him the spirit of immortal youth, who had scarcely time to cry, "Then what is life?" before fate sealed his lips. In *Adonais* he prophetically praises death as if for his own burial, but in that last moment of the storm on the Gulf of Spezia he might have sung a still grander song. For he was glad to die. He was one of

. . . the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conqueror, but as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame
Fled back like eagles to their native noon.

H. M.

A New Pulitzer Prize

A NEW PULITZER PRIZE

The award of a Pulitzer Prize of one thousand dollars to the *Collected Poems* of Edwin Arlington Robinson is a most agreeable surprise, as this is the first Pulitzer Prize ever granted to a poet.

Four years ago, when the Poetry Society of America gave its first annual five hundred dollars to Sara Teasdale's *Love Songs*, the award, being made in conjunction with the Pulitzer prizes, was falsely attributed to the same origin. An editorial in POETRY for August, 1918, called attention, as follows, to the omission of poetry from the will:

Mr. Pulitzer's will, creating a school of journalism at Columbia University, with annual thousand-dollar prizes for a novel, an editorial, a book of science, etc., omitted poetry. Probably he never thought of it—nobody was thinking of poetry during the period when his will was drawn. Of course the omission of poetry from any prize-list which included at least two literary products, the novel and the play, was preposterous; and we may hope that the present donor, or other donors, may permanently atone for the slight with an annual prize as large as the other prizes.

The poem of each year—or book of poems—must be, we submit, at least as prize-worthy as the editorial of the year. It may be, of course, of a value immeasurably greater, for, by the favor of the gods, it may be a masterpiece, an enduring work of genius—a distinction which could scarcely be claimed for any editorial.

When this year's awards were announced, with Mr. Robinson's book among them, the editor wrote to Columbia University a letter inquiring about the improved status of poets; and received the following answer:

[215]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

To the Editor: In reply to your letter of May 24th I beg to say that the poetry prize to which you refer was established by the Advisory Board of the School of Journalism at their meeting in May, 1921, at which meeting it was on motion unanimously

"*Resolved*, That a prize of One thousand dollars be established for the best volume of verse published during the year by an American author."

The Board at the same time discontinued another prize for which there had been no competition, which action set free sufficient funds to establish the poetry prize.

Frank D. Packenthal

The initial award is of course worthy of all praise, though the committee may have regretted that they could not honor also Miss Millay's *Second April*. Indeed, the year 1921, presenting two such books, was singularly rich. The three members of the poetry jury were Wilbur L. Cross, Richard Burton and Ferris Greenslet. Though we cannot criticize the verdict in this case, we must repeat once more our plea that all juries should be strictly professional, and that poets alone have the right and the authority to award honors in their art.

H. M.

REVIEWS

CARLOS WILLIAMS' NEW BOOK

Sour Grapes, by William Carlos Williams. Four Seas Co.

This is, I believe, the fourth book that Dr. Williams has published. *The Tempers*, which came first, was a bit thin, but contained two fine poems of their sort. Next came *Al Que Quiere*, a hard-bitten book that attempted to create poetry out of urban modernity. *Sour Grapes*

Carlos Williams' New Book

develops, more or less, the manner of *Al Que Quiere*, and probably contains a greater number of successful poems. In between these two came *Kora in Hell*, a mass of prose fragments of Flaubertian precision, that as a whole got nowhere.

Dr. Williams has a considerable leaning toward the "conceit," and some of his finest poems are examples of it, although at other times he drags this structure in by the heels. By "conceit" I mean an intellectual relationship between two objects physically unrelated, one of which fuses with the sound and takes on an image existence. For example, the poem called *To Waken an Old Lady*:

Old age is
a flight of small
cheeping birds
skimming
bare trees
above a snow glaze.
Gaining and failing,
they are buffeted
by a dark wind.
But what?
On harsh weedstalks
the flock has rested,
the snow
is covered with broken
seedhusks,
and the wind tempered
by a shrill
piping of plenty.

Such poems as this and *The Nightingales*, as the *Love*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Song in Al Que Quiere beginning "Sweep the house clean," are as perfect and as final as Herrick; they make a reviewer feel ridiculous. But in *A Celebration* the method is worked to death—perhaps because it was a bit tired before it got under way and then had a long way to go; and in *Primrose* the conceit is superfluous. If we had been given the images without the explanatory yellow, they would have hit harder.

In such poems as *The Widow's Lament in Springtime*, however, one finds the simple physical image—the image without ulterior "meaning" or even metaphor—used with great power:

Today my son told me
that in the meadows,
at the edge of the heavy woods
in the distance, he saw
trees of white flowers.
I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh near them.

Dr. Williams concerns himself with certain phases of American life, which he seems to feel acutely; and up to date he is not the dupe of his material. That is, he knows that stenographic reports of snowbirds or hawthorns do not suffice, even when smeared with pretty language. He looks for relations and the sharpest way to get them down.

Despite all Dr. Williams' passion to the contrary, he is greatly influenced by his contemporaries and predecessors

Carlos Williams' New Book

—by which I do not mean to condemn him, but simply to indicate that he, like any good writer, is inextricably caught in Mr. Eliot's "tradition." His prose is obviously of the school of Flaubert, and his verse has gone through various influences. The poems in this book have, for the most part, worked away from the earlier jagged bitterness, into a certain serenity of manner that one associates with Mr. Pound's Chinese translations—a manner that Mr. Pound (among others) has used consciously and successfully. How conscious Dr. Williams' use of it may be, I do not know; but if it is used unconsciously, it may be dangerous—the poet may cease to be able to see his material through the sticky haze of his manner. Anyway one has a right to wonder, when so many of Dr. Williams' trivialities (*Spring*, *Epitaph*, etc.) have become sweet instead of censorable. His grapes are not so sour as they once were, although this may be no great matter.

There are more fine poems in the book than one can mention in a short review, among the most extraordinary being *Romance Moderne*, despite a few low spots. Occasionally a good poem is marred by some unnecessary triteness, as *Overture to a Dance of Locomotives* by its title and last line. Several fine poems have been omitted, among them *Wild Orchard* and *A Coronal*. I choose to end by quoting one poem without comment—*The Nightingale*:

My shoes, as I lean
unlacing them,
stand out upon

[219]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

flat worsted flowers
under my feet.
Nimbly the shadows
of my fingers play
unlacing
over shoes and flowers.

Yvor Winters

A SUNLIT CLEARING

Dreams Out of Darkness, by Jean Starr Untermeyer. B. W. Huebsch.

Jean Starr Untermeyer is so completely a mistress of form, that, though at times her content is weak, one still admires. To have pinned down form in these days of wavering outline! *Lake Song* realizes the lake suggestion, the rush forward and the sudden restraint, through toning down, becoming almost prose but subtly avoiding prose. The rhythm grows upon one, but since the matter is slight and inapt, grows upon one as a pattern woven of air, such an intangible pattern as the wind might have woven above her lake. In *Sinfonia Domestica* and many other of the "woman" poems the poet is fundamental. These poems, when they do fail, fail for lack of *le mot juste*; they are always psychologically poignant. Mastery of form is one achievement; of spirit, another; of diction, word and image, still another. Although I can understand how one might call *Sinfonia Domestica* a fine poem for its theme and passion, for me, although I grant the theme and passion and call them fundamental, it is a "beating

A Sunlit Clearing

about the bush": there are many words but few clear-cut images, so many words that the essential motive is almost submerged. For me the two lines in the poem are:

And bank my flame to a low hearth-fire, believing
You'll come for warmth and life to its tempered glow.

From the Road in November is a good example of poetic paradox: expressing a thought in such a fashion as to create an atmosphere belying it. The first stanza is *The Road in November*, no questioning that; the second and third stanzas are comfortable pictures having nothing to do with either November or death, so completely departing from the keynote that the last two lines of the third stanza, in which the primary mood recurs, are rendered impotent.

But then the last line of *Little Dirge*—

My youth is slipping through the door—

is so complete and so profound that it might be one of Yvor Winters' *Musterbook* poems, and stand alone.

In *Berkshire Twilight*, again paradox. The first stanza is inconsequential; I quote the second:

Evening drops over their peaks
And chars their flame.
Their color sifts into grayness.
With me it is the same.

A preponderance of *r*'s, voluptuous sound that nullifies the negativity of even such a word as *chars*. There are certain words that, in spite of their accepted definition,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

one may not use in writing in certain contexts. *Flame* and *color* here outweigh not only *grayness* and *sift*, but the three dulling periods. The poem has the effect of a double negative. Impressionism understands the art of juxtaposition of word as of sound and of color. I am put in mind of two lines of an autumn poem by Janet Lewis:

The deer, the deer, among the withered asters.
The spider making tight his web.

On Temples, though propagandistic, is apt. *Eve Before the Tree* I should call a brave failure. The story scarcely lends itself to psychological treatment. It has in fact been told perfectly in the third chapter of Genesis. Consciousness is the anathema of this generation. Let us pray that our children will not be introspective. Eve analyzes, digs up motives; she is more the Eve of after the eating than before it. Not to mention such anachronisms as:

If there was life before
I have forgotten it, nor can remember
Father nor mother, sister, nurse, nor friend.

Dreams Out of Darkness is in truth uneven in texture. Throughout one finds an abundant womanly sympathy, the power of nice observation, and a deftness in the employment of metrics. The rhythms are plastic and comfortable. If one objects to the paucity of idea in, say, *Mist*, one finds oneself instantly refuted by the authenticity of *Anti-erotic* and *Little Dirge*. Throughout one finds vacillation between the naturalistic method and

A Sunlit Clearing

the conventionally poetic. The tone is muted, always in a low key. There are no new words, no significant digressions, no discoveries. But one has a sense of having gone into a woman's heart, found it lovely and understandable, and come out satisfied with womankind. The tiptoe of rapture, however, is not there. *Two and a Child* is perhaps representative:

Does the spring night call little boys
As it calls their wild young mothers?
But what can a child know of us—or others?
He has different joys.
A tree that bende and almost smothers
Two in the road who clasp and quiver,
To him is only a swing by the river—
One of his outdoor toys.
Put him to bed and let us flee
Out in the night with other lovers.
It will not be long till he discovers
What's known to you and me.
And then when a destined maiden hovers
Near for what only he can give her . . .
No! Close the door. What makes me shiver?
I will stay here. Let me be.

Pearl Andelson

TARNISHED GOLD

Paul Verlaine, by Harold Nicolson. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This book is a dispassionate appraisal of the life and work of the greatest French symbolist poet. The reader who delights in a good biography should follow step by step through his dark byways of struggle this poet of the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"shifty Mongolian eyes," should apprehend his pitiful weaknesses and failures. He was like other boys constitutionally, although perhaps handicapped by the fact that he was the only child of parents who were already middle-aged when he was born. It is interesting to read of his days of schooling, of how at eighteen he obtained his degree at the Sorbonne, "like other ordinary French schoolboys, with no brilliance, but quite creditably." Mr. Nicolson tells us that in general Verlaine's childhood had little effect upon his future development. The great factor in his life was alcohol, and this had not menaced him before the age of eighteen.

Verlaine's life is the story of hopes and disappointments not unknown to other poets. But in his case the green of absinthe spread its taint over everything. He made great efforts at reform, notably once when for a year the influence of his young wife kept him sober. But the evil days returned invariably, and he became an habitual inebriate. It is hard to believe that in spite of the devils which were dragging him down his literary output did not seem to suffer, and that some of his most beautiful poems were born of these times.

And yet many of those which he wrote before this period have touched the human heart more poignantly than those of his maturer years; indeed in the last few years of his life his work sometimes showed Symbolism gone wrong—it was so steeped in intimate details as to be banal. But Verlaine at his best can throw us into an

atmosphere: if he writes about a mist, the hair feels wet with mist; if he writes of a garden we actually inhale the warm perfume, so subtly does he use intimacy, suggestion, association—the fundamentals of Symbolism. Other poetry has had these qualities, from the Greeks down; but, as Mr. Nicholson points out: "The Symbolists were the first to raise what had been an accidental virtue in others to the level of a doctrine for themselves." And he says also: "Verlaine did not invent Symbolism—he certainly did not direct its future development; but he was able at the psychological moment to catch and reflect the floating aspiration, and to give to it a definite cadence and a form."

A comparatively large portion of the book is devoted to the life of Arthur Rimbaud, and after reading these chapters we realize that to have given less space to the subject would have been to omit what is a valuable contribution to a true understanding of Verlaine's character. Mr. Nicholson has scant liking for Rimbaud, and his picture of this writer is not attractive. A large, red-fisted boy, with filthy hair that hung down lank between his shoulders, a snub nose and a damp fleshy mouth. He regards his entrance into the life of Verlaine as the greatest influence for evil that ever came near it. He tells us how Rimbaud forced himself upon Verlaine, how Verlaine forced Rimbaud upon his literary intimates in Paris—a very tactless performance, and how he dragged him to gatherings where he behaved like the boor he was and

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

from which he was promptly excluded. He became linked with all his friend's doings: he drank with him, helped him to spend his poor mother's capital, left him when there were no resources, and reappeared when he found it to his profit to do so; and he enticed him on the fateful and ever to be regretted trip to London.

Yet the most enthusiastic followers of Rimbaud cannot accuse Mr. Nicolson of having failed to estimate his work at its true value. In speaking of the *Bateau Ivre* he calls it an astounding production:

That is should be the work of a boy of sixteen is well-nigh incredible. In the glare of its inspiration the glib architecture of the Parnassians, the cadence of Verlaine's own poetry, assume but a paltry complexion. No wonder that the generation of today looks for stimulus to Rimbaud rather than to Verlaine or even Mallarmé—to Rimbaud, who at nineteen was forever to fling literature behind him.

He designates *Saison en Enfer* as an acid human document, and speaks at length of *Les Illuminations*, which, after the former, is most typical of Rimbaud's "unpleasing genius." *Aube*, in this collection, he considers to be as fine a prose poem as exists in any language.

Mr. Nicolson explains that he had hoped at first to give in an appendix a translation of the poems quoted in the text. We are glad that he abandoned the plan. Doubtless he, if anyone, could express Verlaine's poetry in English. But attempts by others to render into our language even French poets more easily translated are almost sure to be disappointing, few of the results rising above libretto English. Mr. Nicolson has decided wisely,

Tarnished Gold

and it is a pleasure to find that he has given us almost all of the poems which are the most exquisite or the most characteristic in the tongue in which they were meant to exist. The author says: "Verlaine of all poets is too elusive to admit of translation, and above all of a literal translation into English prose." This is what I have maintained whenever I have spoken of Verlaine's work in other articles in this magazine. The peculiar music is purely an emanation of his own atmosphere—perhaps more so than in the case of any other foreign poet. His syncopation is of the sort to be found in no other language than his own. To omit it, or to try to approach its like, could hardly fail to be a distortion.

This whole book is carried through with a subtle, yet firm and often audacious touch. Scholarly it certainly is, but not in the sense of that word which restricts the pedagogic mind. There are a few inaccuracies—the American reader will be surprised to learn that Stuart Merrill is an Englishman!—and there are occasional phrases which startle; but these are slight flaws.

The author bares Verlaine's weaknesses and gives his mitigating characteristics, without a hint as to his own opinions regarding them. He lays the facts before you, and it is for you to conclude. He tells us, incidentally, in the Rimbaud chapters, that Verlaine had no spark of jealousy or personal ambition, and that he flung himself with real generosity into the task of helping other poets. Those who derive from this poet's work only an aroma of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

the wine-shop, who picture him first of all as a vulgar sot, will have a change of heart after reading this biography. Paul Verlaine had noble traits, he had lovable traits; and these went into his poetry.

Agnes Lee Freer

SLAVIC POETRY

Modern Russian Poetry, selected and translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Anthology of Modern Slavonic Literature, translated by P. Selver. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Modern Czech Poetry, translated by P. Selver. E. P. Dutton & Co.

An Anthology of Yugoslav Poetry. Edited by Dr. B. S. Stanoyevich. Richard G. Badger.

The vigor and elegantly tutored violence of the Russian ballet, the drastic investigations and discoveries of Russian fiction, the naive splendor of Russian painting, and Russian music with its delicate French soul in a rioting body, may lead you to expect, in Russian poetry, something equally vivid and fresh, a balancing surprise. You may be prepared, as I was, to add to the French and English—the only modern literatures, so far as I can discover, that have a life and character of their own and enjoy the distinction of possessing masterpieces—a Russian literature embodying that figment of the European imagination, the Slavic Soul.

Modern Russian Poetry, if approached with such expectations, will bring a somewhat chilly disillusion. For until the last pages there are no particularly arresting poems. And the last poems, while they deal with events that may be localized, have fortunately no local flavor. They are written in the tone and from the attitude of the modern man everywhere in the world; in the same idiom and with the same ratiocination.

In many ways the haunting anachronism of Russia's political machine has stalked and parried its poems. One feels not only confusion, but even evasion, of realities. Russian poets have been led to sentimentalize their attitude to the land, to life, to the peasantry, to the misery of Russia. Patriotism and Revolution trespass continually, and are unpleasantly immobilized in figures of speech. And too often the poets' exaltation is the rapid breath of running away; their simplicity, the content of hasty refuge.

Russian life is too tentative, too provisional. *If* stands stark in the thinking; the hurdle of every decision. To my mind, it has been the reason for much of the mysticism. Much of the pessimism and despair is also traceable to this ghastly warning. To be faced continually with this lean and quick-legged and always outstripping *If* is finally to lose hope.

Alexander Blok in his wonderful *Scythians* repeats it. Russia is undecided, wavering. She is between East and West, between a beloved betrayer and his foe ambushed

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

by her elbow. Magnificent and challenging is the poem; a clue to the instability of Russian life.

As this anthology reveals it, we have the poetry of a troubled minor literature, exceedingly rich in promise. Unless it is a mere activity of sick nerves, the intensity of life in Russia today should bring great poetry—is bringing a hint of it in the poetry of the minute.

The book may be regarded also as a fine contribution to English literature. Never is one conscious that the work is a translation. For the approximately one hundred and twenty Russian poems which have been rendered, parallel English poems have been created.

The notes are perhaps too copious. They make of the book almost a guide to Russian literature, with excerpts for illustration. The method betrays itself most keenly when, in the case of Baratynsky, a closely printed paragraph of two hundred words introduces a verselet of six puny lines whose banality too impudently satirizes the expectations raised by the fattening preface.

To realize that nationalism has made a great master of Pushkin is to appreciate the unhappy effects of this virtuoso emotion, proud of the iridescence of stagnation. Reports come that young poets are harking back to Pushkin—it is pitiful, with so many powerful men about them.

To me the book's area of interest begins with Valery Brusov, although stray poems before him paint the desert. Ivanov, Blok, Byely, Kluyev, Yesenin, Oreshin, and Marienhof—these shouting, a bit strident, a bit knowing,

but independent and conscious young poets are the poets of Russia. The buzzing Pushkin, the crooning Lermontov, the ballyhooing Konstantin Balmont, are the bad starts of Russian poetry.

These young men write as original poets are writing in England, France and America. Marienhof might almost be a Russian visit of Ezra Pound:

Jesus is on the Cross again, and Barrabas
We escort, mealy-mouthed, down the Tverskoi Prospekt. . .
Who will interrupt, who? The gallop of Scythian horses?
Violins bowing the Marseillaise?

.
Pile rubbish, all the rubbish in a heap;
And like Savonarola, to the sound of hymns,
Into the fire with it. . . Whom should we fear?—
When the mundiculi of puny souls have become—worlds.

A quatrain from Yesenin contains an image that has obsessed me:

From empty straths, a slender arch ascending:
Fog curls upon the air and, moss-wise, grows;
And evening, low above the wan streams bending,
In their white waters washes his blue toes.

These whispers will not give any suggestion of the full-throated singing of the two poets quoted. For these, and their splendid company in the last half of the book, redeem the whole book; make it about as valuable as any book of poetry recently issued in America.

Mr. Selver's *Anthology of Slavonic Literature* attempts too much, and therefore the results are negligible. The job might as well not have been done. To represent

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

adequately the prose of Russia, Poland, Bohemia, Jugoslavia, etc., in one ordinary volume, and pack in the poetry of these peoples as well, is so obviously futile that it is a wonder to me that so accomplished an editor and critic tried to do it.

Mr. Selver's book of Czech verse is admirable, however. The translation flavor is sometimes on these verses, but it gives an exotic aroma which makes one pleasantly aware of tasting something foreign. One feels that the pre-contemporary Czech poets were stronger and more robust than their brothers in Russia. This little book will serve as a companion to *Modern Russian Poetry*, although different in spirit and manner, and even in format. The original texts are included.

Space is lacking for extracts, which indeed would give scarcely a hint of the quality of some of the poetry in this book; but I wish to call attention to a remarkable nationalist, whose utterance has the stark obsessive simplicity of frenzy, and is extraordinarily effective: Pietr Bezruc, whose poems are too long and continuous for quotation. They are written somewhat in the sweeping manner of Whitman, who has strongly influenced Czech poetry.

The Stanoyevich anthology is mentioned last because it has so little affinity with the others. Its title is anomalous, for all the poetry given is folk-song. The specimens given are melodious, charming, but a bit one-stringed and monotonous.

Isidor Schneider

NOTES

Mr. Alfred Kreymborg, author of *Mushrooms*, *Blood of Things*, *Plays for Poem-mimes*, *Plays for Merry-Andrews*, founder of *Others* of happy memory, has often appeared in POETRY. Since his retirement from the editorship of the international monthly *Broom*, Mr. and Mrs. Kreymborg have left Rome and at last accounts were sojourning at Rapallo. *Pianissimo* will be included in a book to be published this autumn—by which of his numerous publishers the author does not state.

Miss Lola Ridge, now once more in New York, has recently become the American editor of *Broom*, with an office at 3 East Ninth Street. Her books, *The Ghetto* and *Sun-up*, are published by B. W. Huebsch.

Mr. John Hall Wheelock, of New York, author of *Dust and Light* and earlier books of verse, will publish, through Charles Scribner's Sons, a new book this autumn.

Mr. Morris Gilbert is now once more in New York, after his naval service in the war and later experiences in the Near East and elsewhere. His first volume, *A Book of Verse*, was issued privately in 1917.

Mr. A. A. Rosenthal is now living in Birmingham, Ala.

Of the three English poets represented this month, two have appeared before in POETRY:

Mrs. Anna Wickham's first book, *The Contemplative Quarry*, was first published in London, by the Poetry Book Shop, in 1915, when Padraic Colum reviewed it in our pages. Last year Harcourt Brace & Co. issued a larger volume under a double title, *The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer*, with an appreciative introduction by Louis Untermeyer. A new volume will appear this autumn.

Mr. Louis Golding is the author of *Sorrows of War* (E. P. Dutton & Co.) and *Shepherd Singing Ragtime*. Mr. Golding, usually in London, is now sojourning in the Austrian Tyrol.

Miss Rosamond Langbridge, a resident of Hambrook, Hampshire, England, is the only poet of the month who is new to our readers.

Mr. E. K. Broadus requests the correction of an error in the *Notes* of our May number. He is of the faculty of the University of Alberta, Canada, not the University of Manitoba.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

All Around Brunswick, by Annie O'Connor. Glover Bros., Brunswick, Ga.

The Soul's Voice, by Elizabeth Voss. Richard G. Badger.

Song and Dream, by D. W. Newsom. Stratford Co., Boston.

Singing Rivers, by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe. Bodley Head, London.

Moonlight and Common Day, by Louise Morey Bowman. Macmillan Co. of Canada, Toronto.

Satire and Romance, by Noah F. Whitaker. Pri. ptd., Springfield, O.

Heavenly Mansions, by C. C. Walsh. Pri. ptd., San Angelo, Tex.

Point de Mire, by Celine Arnould. Jaques Povolosky & Co., Paris.

Sonnets from Tuscany and Other Poems, by Lucia. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.

A Gate of Cedar, by Katharine Morse. Macmillan Co.

Blue Lakes to Golden Gates, by Saxe Churchill Stimson. Pri. ptd., Milwaukee, Wis.

Slabs of the Sunburnt West, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

Prosas Profanas, by Ruben Dario. Translated by Charles B. McMichael. Nicholas L. Brown, New York.

Old English Poetry—Translations into Alliterative Verse, by J. Duncan Spaeth. University Press, Princeton, N. J.

Companions—an Anthology. Samuel A. Jacobs, New York.

Poems from Punch, 1909-1920, edited by W. B. Drayton Henderson. Macmillan & Co., London.

PROSE:

The Laureateship: A Study of the Office of Poet Laureate, with Some Account of the Poets, by Edmund Kemper Broadus. Clarendon Press, Oxford, Eng.

Creative Unity, by Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan Co.

Four Doses, by Igie Pulliam Wetterdorf. Stratford Co.

The New Poetry—A Study Outline, prepared by Mary Prescott Parsons. H. W. Wilson Co., New York.

On English Poetry, by Robert Graves. Alfred A. Knopf.

The So-called Human Race, by Bert Leston Taylor. Alfred A. Knopf.

We Are Backing the Poets— *Are You Backing Us?*

For a verse-writer to be printed in POETRY is about the most honorable of recognitions.

Ford Madox Hueffer in the New York Evening Post Literary Review.

This monthly publication is an exhibition of literary faith and bravery that belong to the heroic age.

The Daily Journal, East St. Louis

The varied interest and beauty presented are typical of POETRY'S quality. Thanks to a rare coincidence of poise and generous imagination, of sense and sensitiveness, it ranks easily as the best vehicle of poetry in the English language.

From an editorial in the New York Sunday Tribune.

POETRY has become a significant force in the intellectual life of America. That astute observer, the late William Marion Reedy, wrote: "Probably Miss Monroe has done more for the high art of song than any other person in the United States"—a statement which has been generously supported by other commentators of similar prestige.

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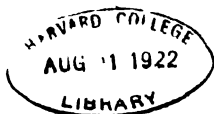
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No. V

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Edited by Harriet Monroe**

August 1922

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Vol. XX

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POETRY for AUGUST, 1922

| | PAGE |
|---|--|
| These Are but Words | <i>Muna Lee</i> 235 |
| The Sonnet—I-IX | |
| At Night | <i>Jessica Nelson North</i> 242 |
| The Sleeper—First Autumn—Dreams—Suddenly—Bogie— | |
| Boatman—To the Man Who Loves Twilight | |
| Your Hands—From the Telephone | <i>Florence Ripley Mastin</i> 247 |
| Beginning and End | <i>Louise Bogan</i> 248 |
| Elders—Resolve—Knowledge—Leave-taking—To a Dead | |
| Lover | |
| Poems from the Chinese | <i>Translated by Louise S. Hammond</i> 252 |
| Summer Phases | <i>Katherine Wisner McCluskey</i> 254 |
| The Spree—Transit—A Parable—Wholly Happy | |
| Talk from the Dust | <i>Elizabeth Madox Roberts</i> 257 |
| The Sky—Numbers—Autumn—The People—A Beautiful | |
| Lady—August Night | |
| Song Nets | <i>Hilda Conkling</i> 261 |
| Snow Morning—What I Said—Little Green Bermuda Poem— | |
| When Moonlight Falls—Elsa—Cloudy Pansy—Field-mouse— | |
| "I Wondered and I Wondered" | |
| Nature the Source | <i>H. M.</i> 266 |
| On Translating Chinese Poetry I | <i>Eunice Tietjens</i> 268 |
| Reviews: | |
| Mr. Squire | <i>Pearl Andelson</i> 274 |
| Red Wrath | <i>H. M.</i> 276 |
| Calm Waters | <i>Marion Strobel</i> 280 |
| From the Nineties to the Present | <i>Royall Snow</i> 282 |
| Correspondence: | |
| Paris Notes | <i>Jean Cail</i> 287 |
| Notes and Books Received | 291, 292 |

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

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AUGUST 1922

THESE ARE BUT WORDS

THE SONNET

WHAT other form were worthy of your praise
But this lute-voice, mocking the centuries
In many a silvery phrase that hallowed is
By love not faltering with lengthening days?
A lute that I have little worth to raise
And little skill to sound—yet not amiss
Your love may find it, since my heart in this
Only one thing for your heart only says.

These are no perfect blossoms I offer you,
No rose whose crimson cup all longing slakes,
Not moonflowers, sunflowers, flowers rich of hue,

[235]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Nor silver lilies mystical with dew—
No more than bluets, blown when April takes
Millions of them to make one meadow blue.

I

I have been happy: let the falcon fly,
And follow swiftly where the light wings whirl—
Let him bring down the reckless wanderer,
Snatch back that eager rapture from the sky!
And I have been contented: let me cry
My discontent, until, like reeds astir
Before the swift, the tragic whisperer,
Broken are these frail dreams that satisfy!

I have known laughter: make me blind with tears.
I have loved silence: make me deaf with sound.
For every joy set vengeful grief above.
I will not shrink before the threatening years;
I will not falter, I will not give ground;
And I will love as you would have me love!

II

I have a thousand pictures of the sea—
Snatches of song and things that travellers say.
I know its shimmering from green to gray;
At dawn and sunset it is plain to me.
Like something known and loved for years will be

That sight of it when I shall come some day
Where little waves and great waves war and play,
And little winds and great winds fly out free.

Of love I had no pictures: love would come
Like any casual guest whom I could greet
Serenely, and serenely let depart—
Love, that came like fire and struck me dumb,
That came like wind and swept me from my feet,
That came like lightning shattering my heart.

III

Life of itself will be cruel and hard enough:
There will be loss and pain enough to bear;
Battles to wage, sorrow and tears to share.
We must know grief—the bitter taste thereof;
Must mark the Shadow towering above;
Must shut our eyes to gain the strength to dare,
And force tired hearts to face the noise and glare
Though it is dusk and silence that we love.

Life has no need of stones that we might heap
To build up walls between; no need of tears
That we seek out and proudly make our own.
O my beloved, since we have alone
These brief hours granted from the hurrying years,
Be patient—life itself will make us weep!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

IV

There have been many Junes with larkspur blowing,
Many Octobers with crimson-berried haws,
When from my heart regret like smoke withdraws,
Wreath after wreath, to watch the sunsets glowing,
And see tall poplars make so brave a showing
Against pale skies at dusk. There were no flaws
To mar the summer for me; never pause
In my delight for winds and waters flowing.

Yet was all beauty beauty uncompleted,
Vaguely perceived, not truly heard and seen;
Or seen as are the hills with mist between,
Or heard as song thin echoes have repeated;
Until you gave earth meaning, giving me
The love that lifts the heart to hear and see.

V

You have not known the autumns I have known.
November for you has bloomed as bright as spring,
With tropic suns to glow and birds to sing,
And flowers more vivid than mine in August blown.
You have made, beside, those autumns half your own
That come with ice and sleet and wind, to sting
The blood itself to ruddy blossoming—
Such autumns as the bleak North knows alone.

My autumns are merely quiet, and they show
Straight trees that are bared alike of leaves and snow—
Yet it is only thus you can know the trees.
Love proud enough to forego bloom and song,
To strip the boughs of foliage; bare and strong
To bide your judgment, would be most like these.

VI

It would be easy to say: "The moon and lake
Made wizardry—how could we see aright?
That was a world unreal in silver light,
And we were lovers for the moment's sake.
It was youth spoke in us, quick to mistake
Earth-lamp for dawn, the mirage for true sight;
Hailing a hill-crest as the long-sought height,
Swearing such oaths as honors us to break."

That would be easiest: then no regret
Could chill a heart grown happy to forget,
Nor touch a soul that sophistry sufficed.
There was a man once, in a hall of trial,
Thrice before cock-crow uttered such denial—
And knows forever that he denied the Christ!

VII

I make no question of your right to go—
Rain and swift lightning, thunder and the sea,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Sand and dust and ashes are less free!
Follow all paths that wings and spread sails know;
Unheralded you came, and even so
If so you will, may you take leave of me.
Yours is your life, and what you will shall be.
I ask no question: hasten or be slow!

But I who would not hold you—I who give
Your freedom to you with no word to say;
And, watching quietly, with my prayers all dumb,
Speed you to any life you choose to live—
Shall ask God's self, incredulous, some day,
Why in the name of Christ He let you come!

VIII

No love can quite forego the battle-field;
Since life is struggle, and love and life are one.
No soul is quiet and sheltered enough to shun
The tireless foes at work to make love yield.
Not flowers and samite, but lance and shield
Were dower of love; not wreath but gonfalon;
And while the bitter struggle is unwon
Not even to faith is all the truth revealed.

Each heart its own most dreaded foe must meet;
Each heart its own conspiracies must lay,
And fight what it finds hardest to defeat.
Mine is it to meet Doubt in serried mass

Muna Lee

Stronger and subtler with each toilsome day;
Yet steel my soul to swear, "They shall not pass."

IX

It will be easy to love you when I am dead—
Shadowed from light and shut away from sound,
Held deeper than the wild roots underground,
Where nothing can be changed and no more said.
All will be uttered then: beyond the dread
Of failure in you or me, I shall have found
Most perfect quietness to fold me round,
Where I can dream while all Time's years are sped.

But now Life roars about me like a sea,
Sears me like flame, is thunder in my ears.
There is no time for song, no space for tears,
And every vision has forsaken me.
In a world earthquake-shaken, lightning-charred,
Love is the hardest where all things are hard.

Muna Lee

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

AT NIGHT

THE SLEEPER

Night. O heavy breather in the surf of sleep,
What is that strange and rosy slenderness
You hold against your heart with so much tenderness?

The Sleeper. It is my wife I hold—
I love her more than life.
She has hair of bronze and gold,
And in twin strands divides it;
It lies across her bosom surplice-wise.
This I know to be true though darkness hides it.

Night. Now all things false dissolve beneath the moon!
This is a sheaf of whispering dreams you hold,
Bound by the tawny sinews of your arm.
They nod together with plumes of bronze and gold,
They breathe and are warm;
They speak together in a sibilant tune.

The Sleeper. It is my own wife.
Her mouth, that is merry and wise,
Is shut; and the lids are shut that cover
Her faithful eyes.

Night. A sheaf of dreams—hush!

The First Dream. She is untrue,
Brother and brother!
This one is new—
Where is the other?

Jessica Nelson North

- The Second Dream.* I hear men say
He had ceased to love her.
Even today
His voice can move her.
- The Third Dream.* I have seen her tremble
When she meets his eyes.
She is deft with lies,
She is quick to dissemble.
- The Fourth Dream.* How is this done,
Brother and brother,
To sleep with one
And dream of another?

Night. A sheaf of dreams, of dreams . . .

The Sleeper. My wife.
My wife.

FIRST AUTUMN

All in our pearl-pale window
The moon's aroma hung.

My love and I together
Our heads upon one pillow,
Looked out where an elm upflung
A branch like a peacock feather.

Heigho, first autumn weather!

[243]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

DREAMS

You curve your body into a vibrant ball,
Dead drunk with sleep.
I have no part in your slumber-scheme at all,
I cannot strike that deep.

You hold me insecurely in your life
As a sand-dune holds trees.
I say, "It is five months—I am your wife."
What shadow facts are these?

I put my hand into your breast. It lies
Unowned, apart.
While more familiar hands . . . and lips . . . and eyes
Press close around your heart.

SUDDENLY

We have a gray room. The walls are gray and bare.
I have hung pictures and set flowers there.
I have made curtains with wide and snowy hem
For our tiny windows to make the best of them.

You look at me. Your look is still and gray.
Your look is cool and dim and far away.
I cannot open the stubborn husks that shut
Your heart away like the kernel in a nut.

Jessica Nelson North

I am afraid of what is in your heart.
I must probe deep; I must tear your mood apart.
Suddenly like a rocket, unaware,
Your eyes blossom and flare!

BOGIE

The black rain settles in our empty block.
The drunken street-lamps leer with sidelong eyes,
Dim and unholy.
Old newspapers, grown restless in the gutter,
With flap and flutter
Rise and subside and rise.
It is half-past-twelve-o'clock,
The night—goes—slowly.

I am awake again. I cannot sleep.
I light the lamp again, and draw the shutter.
I light the lamp against the feet that creep,
The sounds that mutter.
I draw the shutter against the lids that peep.

Something goes crouching at the dripping flank
Of the broken wall! Something in tatters slips
Down alleys dank!
Something from door to door before the rain
Dodges and whines! Something with twisting lips
Terribly smiles outside my shuttered pane!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

BOATMAN

Boatman, leaning on your pole on the Secret River,
Will you tarry for a soul who never knew a lover?
She is very young and cold, her beauty makes me shiver.
I will give you coins of gold to take her softly over.

TO THE MAN WHO LOVES TWILIGHT

Why do you go along the street caressing with quiet eyes
Gray walls, bleak houses, and the dull wet skies?
Have all things gray your blessing?

We do not love your twilight, God and I.
He pelts the rainy heaven
With gorgeous autumn,—hangs the dripping trees
With yellow apples of Hesperides
In lines
Sweetly uneven.
Loops every sodden fence with scarlet vines. . . .

And where you sit
Sufficient to yourself, hugging the gloom,
I prance with rustling silk and candles lit
To make an orgy in our quiet room.

Jessica Nelson North

YOUR HANDS

Hands, your hands, quite calm now
At the day's end,
You are not delicately molded, not exquisite,
Not gentle always. . . .

You are scarred,
With broken lines—
Sultry lines of passion.
There are grotesques in you,
Like forests after fire.

You hold valleys of renunciation,
And crags shaken by the storm,
That only faiths like wild goats know.

Yet now rises, within that dark repose,
Beauty, as she comes hooded at twilight. . . .

Ah, do not touch me, yet . . .

FROM THE TELEPHONE

Out of the dark cup
Your voice broke like a flower.
It trembled, swaying on its taut stem.
The caress in its touch
Made my eyes close.

Florence Ripley Mastin

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

BEGINNING AND END

ELDERS

At night the moon shakes the bright dice of the water;
And the elders, their flower light as broken snow upon the
bush,
Repeat the circle of the moon.

Within the month
Black fruit breaks from the white flower.
The black-wheeled berries turn
Weighing the boughs over the road.
There is no harvest.
Heavy to withering, the black wheels bend
Ripe for the mouths of chance lovers,
Or birds.

Twigs show again in the quick cleavage of season and
season.
The elders sag over the powdery road-bank,
As though they bore, and it were too much,
The seed of the year beyond the year.

RESOLVE

So that I shall no longer tarnish with my fingers
The bright steel of your power,

[248]

Louise Bogan

I shall be hardened against you,
A shield tightened upon its rim.

A stern oval to be pierced by no weapon,
Metal stretched and shaped against you.
For a long time I shall go
Spanned by the round of my strength.

Changeless, in spite of change,
My resolve undefeated;
Though now I see the evening moon, soon to wane,
Stand clearly and alone in the early dark,
Above the stirring spindles of the leaves.

KNOWLEDGE

Now that I know
That passion warms little
Of flesh in the mold,
And treasure is brittle,

I'll lie here and learn
How, over their ground,
Trees make a long shadow
And a light sound.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

LEAVE-TAKING

I do not know where either of us can turn
Just at first, waking from the sleep of each other.
I do not know how we can bear
The river struck by the gold plummet of the moon,
Or many trees shaken together in the darkness.
We shall wish not to be alone
And that love were not dispersed and set free—
Though you defeat me,
And I be heavy upon you.

But like earth heaped over the heart
Is love grown perfect.
Like a shell over the beat of life
Is love perfect to the last.
So let it be the same
Whether we turn to the dark or to the kiss of another;
Let us know this for leavetaking,
That I may not be heavy upon you,
That you may blind me no more.

TO A DEAD LOVER

The dark is thrown
Back from the brightness, like hair
Cast over a shoulder.
I am alone,

Louise Bogan

Four years older;
Like the chairs and the walls
Which I once watched brighten
With you beside me. I was to waken
Never like this, whatever came or was taken.

The stalk grows, the year beats on the wind.
Apples come, and the month for their fall.
The bark spreads, the roots tighten.
Though today be the last
Or tomorrow all,
You will not mind.

That I may not remember
Does not matter.
I shall not be with you again.
What we knew, even now
Must scatter
And be ruined, and blow
Like dust in the rain.

You have been dead a long season
And have less than desire
Who were lover with lover;
And I have life—that old reason
To wait for what comes,
To leave what is over.

Louise Bogan

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

POEMS FROM THE CHINESE

*In the original syllabic and rhyme scheme, to accompany the
Chinese chanting tunes.*

AN OLD MAN'S SONG OF SPRING

By Seng Dji-Nan (Sung Dynasty)

Among the trees I may yet
Enjoy the day at sunset;
For willow winds are not cold,
Apricot rains are not wet.

SEEKING THE HERMIT IN VAIN

By Gia Dao (T'ang Dynasty)

"Gone to gather herbs"—
So they say of you.
But in cloud-girt hills,
What am I to do?

ON BEING DENIED ADMITTANCE TO A FRIEND'S GARDEN

By Yeh Shih (Sung Dynasty)

Although your gate bar *my* way,
You cannot check the spring's play;
For free above your proud wall
There hangs one apricot spray.

[252]

Louise S. Hammond

THE SUDDEN COMING OF SPRING

By Cheng Hao (Sung Dynasty)

Scant clouds just flake the noon sky;
By willowed streamlets stroll I.

But men know not my heart's joy,
And say, "Old fool, the hours fly."

NIGHT-TIME IN SPRING

By Wang An-Shih (Sung Dynasty)

Silence reigns where sound has been;
Chill the breeze, half soft, half keen;

While the moon through sleepless hours
Shifts dark blossoms up the screen.

Translated by Louise S. Hammond

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SUMMER PHASES

THE SPREE

In the uplift of spring
Earth had high thoughts in trees;
Smiling her apple-blossoms,
Blushing her peach-petals,
Delicate as a sprite.

Now she sprawls,
Making loose gestures with spreading vines;
Guffawing vegetables and fruits—
Harlequin melons, Punchinello squashes—
Hiccoughing cucumbers, stuttering tomatoes.
She is mad-drunk with summer.

Soon she'll lie still,
Decently covered with the leaf-brown quilt.
She'll give loud, gusty yawns, then sleep,
Jeered at by rains, pitied by snow;
And wake to chastened, stiff sobriety.

TRANSIT

The purple shadow clings with desperate will
Tightly to the granite hill;
Tries to grow to it.
I try, beloved, dear,

Katherine Wisner McCluskey

To carve me out one solid moment here—
Afraid of cruel winds to blow,
Winds implacable that know
Shadows go.

Winds strip shadows off from hills,
Signalled by cloudy change above.
An instant's whim, and death may harry love.
Should it sever you from me,
I drift, I drift,
Agnostic of reality.

A PARABLE

The magnolia bud
Loosens her white garments
With exquisite reserve.
So love unfolds
While delicate mysteries,
Like odors,
Subtly escape.

The white magnolia,
Of lucent petals
Textured like woman skin,
Crumples to leather
Limp and brown,
Binding a story told.

[255]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

WHOLLY HAPPY

This is the Sabbath Day.
I keep it my own way.
I do not need to go to church to pray.

Feeling and being me
Is good as good can be.
I claim my own identity.

I am as happy as a flower
Perfuming its one hour
With a sweet sense of power.

I am unfettered as a bee
That cleaves a tiny path, but free,
Choosing an orange-blossoming tree.

Making my honey as it does,
I feel as holy as saint ever was.
This is my perfume, prayer and buzz.

Katherine Wisner McCluskey

TALK FROM THE DUST

THE SKY

I saw a shadow on the ground,
And heard a bluejay going by.
A shadow went across the ground,
And I looked up and saw the sky.

It hung up on the poplar tree,
But while I looked it did not stay;
It gave a tiny sort of jerk
And moved a little bit away.

And farther on and farther on
It moved and never seemed to stop.
I think it must be tied with chains,
And something pulls it from the top.

It never has come down again;
And every time I look to see,
The sky is always slipping back
And getting far away from me.

NUMBERS

When I can count the numbers far
And know all the figures that there are,

[257]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Then I'll know everything, and I
Can know about the ground and the sky,

And all the little bugs I see;
And I'll count the leaves on the poplar tree,
And all the days that ever can be.

I'll know all the cows and sheep that pass,
And I'll know all the grass,

And all the places far away;
And I'll know everything some day.

AUTUMN

Dick and Will and Charles and I
Were playing it was election day;
And I was running for president,
And Dick was a band that was going to play,

And Charles and Will were a street parade.
But Clarence came, and said that he
Was going to run for president,
And I could run for school-trustee.

He made some flags for Charles and Will,
And a badge to go on Dickie's coat.
He stood some cornstalks by the fence
And had them for the men that vote.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

Then he climbed on a box and made a speech
To the cornstalk men that were in a row.
It was all about the Dem-o-crats,
And "I de-fy any man to show";

And "I de-fy any man to say",
And all about "It's a big disgrace".
He spoke his speech out very loud
And shook his fist in a cornstalk's face.

THE PEOPLE

The ants are walking under the ground,
And the pigeons are flying over the steeple;
And in between are the people.

A BEAUTIFUL LADY

We like to listen to her dress;
It makes a whisper by her feet.
Her little pointed shoes are gray;
She hardly lets them touch the street.

Sometimes she has a crumpled fan.
Her hat is silvered on the crown,
And there are roses by the brim
That nod and tremble up and down.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

She comes along the pavement walk,
And in a moment she is gone.
She hardly ever looks at us,
But once she smiled and looked at John.

And so we run to see her pass
And watch her through the fence, and I
Can hear the others whispering,
"Miss Josephine is going by."

AUGUST NIGHT

We had to wait for the heat to pass,
And I was lying on the grass,
While Mother sat outside the door,
And I saw how many stars there were.
Beyond the tree, beyond the air,
And more and more were always there.

So many that I think they must
Be sprinkled on the sky like dust.

A dust is coming through the sky!
And I felt myself begin to cry.

So many of them and so small—
Suppose I cannot know them all.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

[260]

SONG NETS

*Song nets,
I weave you with all my love.
You glitter like pearls and rubies,
In you I catch songs like butterflies.
You go past my reaching hand
With a thin gauzy floating,
And the songs are caught
Before they fade away.
Last night
My hand caught a song
Of pines and quiet rivers:
I shall keep it forever.*

SNOW MORNING

Morning is a picture again,
With snow-puffed branches
Out of the wind;
With the sky caught like a blue feather
In the butternut tree.
I cannot see the world behind the snow;
But when I look into my mind,
There, with all its people and colors,
The world sits smiling
Quite warm and cosy.

[261]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

WHAT I SAID

Lilies of the valley,
Bell-shaped moments clustered,
Doves of time—little white doves
Through the dusky sunset-colored air
Set free,
I stroke your wings,
I stroke your folded wings.

LITTLE GREEN BERMUDA POEM

Green water of waves
On the Bermuda beaches,
White coral roads running away,
Pink shells waiting for me to come,
I shall come some day.
How would it sound to be there alone
And hear the Atlantic Ocean
Crash on bright rocks?

This island is a great rainbow
That lasts forever;
People go and come
And the waves forget them.
I see the island turn and turn—
A soap-bubble with rainbows drifting down,
A rainbow ball turning . . .
Always light, always glitter looking through.

[262]

Hilda Conkling

My poem that began with a green wave
Has broken into colors.

WHEN MOONLIGHT FALLS

When moonlight falls on the water,
It is like fingers touching the chords of a harp
On a misty day.
When moonlight strikes the water
I cannot get it into my poem—
I only hear the tinkle of ripples of light.
When I see the water's fingers and the moon's rays
Intertwined,
I think of all the words I love to hear
And try to find words white enough
For such shining.

ELSA

My sister stood on a hilltop
Looking toward the sea.
The wind was in her bronze-colored hair;
She was an image
On a broken wave . . .
Foam was at her feet.
So for a moment she wavered
And was lovely:
And I remember her.

[263]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

CLOUDY-PANSY

Wandering down a dusty road,
I met a gypsy.
She might have dropped out of the trees.
She had a green kerchief
And a blue velvet skirt,
A lavender cape
And a gold locket:
Green shoes on the feet
That trod the powdery road
To the marble-floored Vermont river
Thinking as it goes along . . .

FIELD-MOUSE

Little brown field-mouse
Hiding when the plough goes by,
Timid creature that you are,
Wild thing,
Were you once in the forest?—
Did you move to the fields?
In your brown cloak
You gather grain
For your secret meals;
You will build a house of earth
The way you remember.
From a baby up to your full-grown feeling

[264]

Hilda Conkling

You have run about the field,
As other field-mice will run about
When another century has come
Like a cloud.

"I WONDERED AND WONDERED"

I wondered and wondered . . .
I saw a comrade of mine;
It was a wave smooth and blue
That tossed . . . fell away.
I wondered and wondered . . .
I saw a mountain white with old age:
I could not remember
How I came there.
I wondered and wondered . . .
Under a motherly sky
That knew my name and kind,
That rested my tired thoughts,
That said, "I have a rainbow for you, Hilda,
And a young moon, hidden."

Hilda Conkling

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

COMMENT

NATURE THE SOURCE

HOW can one pause for thought or dreams when mid-summer beckons from stream and hill? There are days when the sheer beauty of the sky is enough to prove the fourth dimension or the doctrine of relativity, when the lapping of lake-water washes away not only human sins but human theories. The ecstasy of mere existence, on such days, may thrill even paltry souls; and those who are keen-winged for joy rise to intuition of the infinite.

Whistler, discussing the relation of nature to art in *Ten O'Clock*, says, "Nature is very rarely right," thereby hammering down a truth with a paradox. But he also says: "Nature contains the elements, in color and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music," elements from which "the artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science, that the result may be beautiful." The artist can not take nature ready-made—he must re-create with his own imagination and re-inspire with his own breath. But nature is his source and starting-point, and back to nature he must go for truth and beauty in the large.

And nature seems sometimes to capture the special graces of art. She composes a field with a tree and cloud, she patterns foamy waves along a strip of beach, she lets fall a cataract in a mountain cleft, she builds the Grand Canyon, she drives a naked colt across a meadow, she

makes a girl move like a goddess—all with an adroit regard for rightness, with that studious care for mass and balance and proportion which art proclaims in masterpieces. The artist must go to nature for hints of rightness—for the thrill of ineffable recognitions by which he knows immortal beauty has bespoken him.

I recall an hour in Rodin's studio, when the great sculptor showed me some of the countless outline drawings in which it was his habit to catch on the wing, as it were, the swift unconscious attitudes of his models as they moved about the room. I remember his almost breathless reverence for liberal nature and her marvellous gifts; and his modest deprecation of himself, of his own share in his art. And Hokusai, at ninety or more, "died learning."

Poets especially must derive the breath of life from nature—only thus may they escape sophistication and find perpetual renewal. They cannot escape her influence—consciously or unconsciously they work out what she has taught them. Do we not find Greece in Homer—the Greek landscape, and its complete and happy union with Greek life? Is it not Italy that we discover in Dante, and merry England—Elizabethan England, wilder than Victorian—in Shakespeare? And today, while the Georgian poets are repeating over and over, rather monotonously, their enchantment with English rural life, do we not hear a larger story from the Americans?

Our poets are becoming aware of their continental heritage. Reading them, one begins to feel nature's great

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

scale, her wide spaces, her inexhaustible variety, in these forty-eight big states compacted into a single nation. A country larger, freer, wilder than the little England whose tongue they speak is asserting its power and scope in the songs they sing.

It may be that the hope of American art—its one advantage, at least, over European—lies in that love of the wilderness which we inherit from the pioneers. We are nearer to wild nature than the crowded old-world peoples, and we still throw off more easily the husks of civilization to build a campfire under the stars. Recently two young poets, both almost penniless, have hiked westward through this office carrying their blanket-rolls; sleeping where they fell after the day's fatigue, trusting to luck for a chance job and meals; tasting of freedom, feeling wide spaces underfoot, wide winds overhead. Let us hope there are few poets so fixed in urban or rural habits that they can not throw them all off for a summer month or more, take a deep plunge into the wilderness, and challenge nature for renewal of life.

H. M.

ON TRANSLATING CHINESE POETRY

I

In the midst of the little whirlpool caused in affairs poetic by the recent translations of Chinese classical poetry—Waley's, Lowell's and Bynner's—I should like to raise a small voice of caution.

[268]

On Translating Chinese Poetry

Do not, because this poetry, as it comes to us, is so simple and direct as almost to seem like folk-poetry, be deceived into thinking that you therefore understand the Chinese. Nothing would be more natural, yet to me it seems that few things could be more erroneous.

For the apparent simplicity of these poems is the result of a complexity so great as to be far beyond anything the West has ever produced. Such a poet as T. S. Eliot, in our own day, is still much too unsophisticated to have written a T'ang poem. Far from being folk-poetry, it was written by the emperors and scholars, much as Latin verse was written in the middle ages of Europe by the scribes and rulers. The intricacies of its prosody are endless. So full is it of plays on words, of classical allusions, of double meanings, that even today one of the favorite pastimes of Chinese scholars of the old school is the endless and friendly discussion of the fine points of these poems. Under the old system the entire education of the young consisted in teaching the children to understand them; and now that education has turned in a different direction it is, I think, safe to say that in a few generations there will remain in China only a handful of men able to appreciate them fully.

The very Chinese language in which they are written, which used once to be thought more primitive than ours, because it is not inflected (that is, the tenses of the verbs, the parts of speech, etc., are not differentiated) is now thought by philologists to have gone through our inflected

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

stage almost before the dawn of history. So that our method of speech became too simple for the Chinese thousands of years ago, and their language went on around the circle to the point where it is found today, in which root ideas only are used, and the rest is left to the imagination. The effect on a westerner is as though they were always cabling, at so much per word.

There are, properly speaking, two Chinese languages now, the written language and the spoken language. The written language is as much more complicated than the other as the most difficult legal phraseology in English is more difficult than ordinary speech. Not only can an uneducated Chinese neither read nor write the written language, he cannot even understand it without explanation when it is read to him, that is, when the syllables are spoken aloud. This has proved very difficult for the missionaries who, in translating the Bible, have therefore felt obliged to make two separate versions, one—which I am told is very bad—in the written language, and one in what is called the “spoken language written down.”

The written language has over forty thousand different ideographs, yet there exist only about four hundred word sounds. Each of these words is a monosyllable, polysyllabic words being unknown. Theoretically, therefore, each word-sound has a hundred different meanings. In practice of course this is not so, as the vocabulary of the common people contains very few words, and even a scholar hardly reads more than eight or nine thousand

On Translating Chinese Poetry

characters. Yet the humblest peasant knows probably half a dozen meanings for *li*, or a mysterious unpronounceable syllable that sounds like *su* and is everywhere much in evidence. In common speech the Chinese get around this difficulty in a number of ways; for instance, by putting two syllables which have approximately the same meaning together, so as to strengthen the association in the mind. The common pidgin phrase "look-see" is a literal translation of this device for making their own language comprehensible to themselves.

Another, and more far-reaching way, is the adoption of "tone." The same syllable pronounced in differing tones of voice takes different meanings. There are four of these tones in Mandarin, and, I believe, as many as nine in Cantonese. These tones, or rather the forerunners of those used today, are one of the elements of prosody.

I have mentioned these few outstanding complexities of the language itself—and I assure you there are many more—only to show the difficulty of the tools with which the Chinese poet works. Let anyone who finds it difficult to write poetry in English offer praises to Apollo that he is not a Chinese!

The prosody is as complex and difficult as might be expected from a nation which communicates in such a language. Too many better informed persons than I have written about it to make more than the merest suggestion necessary here.

The three major elements used are length of line,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

rhyme, and tone. Prosody distinguishes between two tones, a flat or low tone, which in the metrical skeletons is called "ping" and the deflected tones, which include the rising, sinking, and abruptly arrested tones, and are all included in "tseh." These deflected tones are more emphatic, and therefore bear some faint resemblance to our own accented syllables.

A concrete example may make this clearer. Here then is the metrical skeleton of a *tsueh* or four-line poem—one of the standard forms, beginning in *ping*:

ping ping tseh tseh tseh ping ping
tseh tseh ping ping tseh tseh ping
tseh tseh ping ping ping tseh tseh
ping ping tseh tseh tseh ping ping

The first, second and fourth lines rhyme. The third is unrhymed. The tonal pattern is absolutely set, except for six characters, three in each of the middle lines, which may be varied at will. The first and last lines are alike. The third is usually the exact opposite of these two. In content the "short-stop," as it is called, is the first half of a longer poem in which the end is left to the imagination; as with the Japanese hokku, though suggestion has been more highly developed by the Japanese.

I give a literal translation of such a poem by Su Shih (1036-1101) to show the telegraphic condensation of the content.

Spring evening, one moment, price thousand gold.
Flowers have fresh odor, moon has shadow.

On Translating Chinese Poetry

Singing, piping (comes from the) balcony floor, fine, fine.
Garden swing is motionless, evening drips, drips.

I have added punctuation and words which are understood. The last three words mean that the water in the water-glass which records the evening drips and drips.

What are the difficulties of our sonnet compared to this?

Miss Louise Hammond, of Wusih, in Kiangsu, has recently done some very interesting work in taking down the chanting tunes to which these poems are recited by the Chinese scholars. And to accompany these tunes she has made (see page 252) translations having the same number of syllables as the original poems, the same rhyme-scheme, and reproducing as nearly as possible the rhythmic patterns. The tonal pattern, of course, cannot be reproduced, as we have no equivalent in English. She found that "iambic metre, with a sudden unexpected bang on the seventh syllable where the two stresses come together," was made necessary by the tune. Her translations of these poems show the form, although the reader can judge for himself how much of the content must be omitted in order to bring the English version down to the required number of syllables. These translations, preserving as they do part of the original form, preserve also, to my ears, much of the magic. Whereas the recent free-verse translations, in reproducing the entire content, have been obliged to sacrifice this magic of form which is so essential a part of the Chinese poems.

So much for the complexity. Now to return to the

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

simplicity. The T'ang poems, to which the bulk of the recently rendered poems belong, are written in language "so simple as to be almost colloquial," always, be it remembered, within the complexity already mentioned. Witter Bynner's co-worker, Dr. Kiang Kang-hu, was constantly urging him to use the simplest and most direct language possible in putting them into English. Hence the folk-like quality of the better translations. There seems little doubt that the T'ang poets themselves would prefer to be translated thus simply, since to them the complexity was merely a part of an already assimilated background, as the lesser complexities of our own language and prosody are merely a background for our own poets. And the poets of this golden age of China, like ourselves, were being deliberately direct.

Yet the effect on a western reader is oddly deceptive. It all seems so easy and comprehensible. At last we understand the Chinese! But do we? I for one, doubt it. And in the midst of the jubilation I raise my voice of caution.

Eunice Tietjens

(To be concluded)

REVIEWS

MR. SQUIRE

Poems: Second Series, by J. C. Squire. George H. Doran.

One may go to Mr. J. C. Squire without shock-absorbers, confident that he will not affront by offering crude

[274]

novelties either in substance or in treatment. One may go to him as to an old acquaintance whose conversation one knows without listening. Not that Mr. Squire might be called a reactionary. No, indeed. He skips beats; he employs in every second or third poem a set of imperfect rhymes; he speaks with true modern insight of an aeroplane, a football, strychnine, and *angina pectoris*. If he mistakes history for profundity, he is at any rate to be commended for making a thorough job of it: *vide*, *The Moon*, with mention not only of Hector and Achilles but also of Carthage, Alexander's Grave, and the tomb of Moses in the wilderness. Nothing has been omitted save Jacob's Ladder and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. As a matter of fact, Mr. Squire has, inadvertently perhaps, discovered and demonstrated a most pleasant, a most esthetic, manner of teaching the truisms of science: of ornithology in *The Birds*, of introductory psychology in *Process of Thought*, and of botany in *A Poet to his Muse*. History I have already mentioned; but history is an art, not a science, and with Mr. Squire art is incidental.

He takes his materials as he finds them, mixed and ready: middle-aged and respectable combinations of rhythms and words, plus the philosophy of his forefathers slightly modified to include Darwinism. Upon this he has superimposed the sentimentality of a boy in his first love affair. Above all one must not look a fact in the face. Circumlocution, he points out, is praiseworthy. Ideas may thus be dispensed with. It is difficult to break

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ways, to create new images and force them into coherence in fresh words, to penetrate beyond externals. Let us, therefore, glorify Science, Nature, Patriotism, and our dog which has just died (*vide, A Dog's Death*). As soon as the new tariff is passed, we shall again have peace on earth.

Fen Landscape is the single poem in the volume that one may in good conscience select to quote. However, it is not representative:

Wind waves the reeds by the river,
Grey sky lids the leaden water,
Ducks fly low across the water,
Three flying—one quacks sadly.

Grey are the sky and the water,
Grey the lost ribbons of reed-beds,
Small in the silence a black boat
Floats upon wide pale mirrors.

Pearl Andelson

RED WRATH

Bars and Shadows—the Prison Poems of Ralph Chaplin.

With an *Introduction* by Scott Nearing. Leonard Press,
New York.

A book like this makes one wonder at the futility of certain human laws and processes. Mr. Chaplin, free, was an I. W. W. agitator shooting off social fireworks more explosive than destructive. Mr. Chaplin, imprisoned these five years, becomes a martyr-poet, shaping his dreams into arrow-pointed far-travelling songs. Society

[276]

doesn't like this or that revolutionist, and so it sends him to prison, the gallows or the stake—in other words, sends him exactly where his suffering will make the most effective appeal to the imaginations of men, so that each word will drop weightily from his lips like minted gold.

Here is the first half of *The Red Feast*:

Go fight, you fools! Tear up the earth with strife
And spill each other's guts upon the field;
Serve unto death the men you served in life
So that their wide dominions may not yield.

Stand by the flag—the lie that still allures;
Lay down your lives for land you do not own,
And give unto a war that is not yours
Your gory tithe of mangled flesh and bone.

But whether it be yours to fall or kill,
You must not pause to question why nor where.
You see the tiny crosses on that hill?
It took all those to make one millionaire.

It was for him the seas of blood were shed,
That fields were razed and cities lit the sky;
And now he comes to chortle o'er the dead—
The condor Thing for whom the millions die.

The bugle screams, the cannons cease to roar.
"Enough! enough! God give us peace again."
The rats, the maggots and the Lords of War
Are fat to bursting from their meal of men.

This may be rather tawdry poetry, and to some of us it seems loose thinking; but it is like to prove bitter propaganda. If the lords of things as they are wished to speed the day of

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The mighty proletarian dictatorship

they could not do better than keep such men as Ralph Chaplin in prison.

Alas, how is it that the world jogs on regardless when such cries are ringing in its ears? Are we then of little faith? And are they prophets who can sing

Accursed Monster, nightmare of the years,
Pause but a moment ere you pass away—
Pause and behold the earth made clean and pure!

And so forth. These passionate pleaders actually believe that a day of social justice will dawn—nay, is dawning, when, under a “proletarian dictatorship” of imposed equalities, the lion and the lamb, the jackal and the prairie-dog, the ass and the race-horse, the elephant and the kangaroo, will live together in choral harmony, contributing and consuming each his just and reasoned communistic dole! Believe it—they go to prison, they suffer and die for it; they set up a temporarily proletarian autocracy in Moscow to prove it, and cling to the faith when their shaky Russian structure rings hollow with famine and brazen with force, and when Lenine, dying in the seat of the Tzars, surely knows at last that he attempted the impossible, and faces, like many another magnanimous dreamer, the tragic irony of his failure.

Ah me, “the Revolution” lags because, not of the apathy, but of the common sense of the world. Democracy is an education in common sense, therefore the

Red Wrath

Revolution will lag to utter weariness in this democracy of ours, which has learned that slow adjustments are more effective than swift ones toward inducing such a measure of social justice as may be attainable under the limitations of human nature, which is always inexorably and adorably foolish and selfish and vain. So let the red agitators talk and the red poets sing, and for God's sake open their prison gates! We need their fire, their color, we need the fervor of their dream. And we need not fear that the structure of our civilization will fall before them.

We have wandered some distance from our text. There is better poetry in Mr. Chaplin's book than the fierce stanzas quoted above—for example, *The Warrior Wind*, or this one, *Mourn not the Dead*, which opens the book:

Mourn not the dead that in the cool earth lie—
Dust unto dust—
The calm, sweet earth that mothers all who die
As all men must.

Mourn not your captive comrades who must dwell—
Too strong to strive—
Within each steel-bound coffin of a cell,
Buried alive.

But rather mourn the apathetic throng—
The cowed and the meek—
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong
And dare not speak!

H. M.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

CALM WATERS

The Blue Ship, by Herbert Jones. Bodley Head, London.

Vers de société—suave, sophisticated, cultured, and very pleasant to read on a warm day in a hammock. I do not mean to be insulting. The poems have charm. And that which is rarer still in poetry—humor. They are the well-mannered expressions of a well-mannered young man. Mrs. Grundy would be entirely satisfied with them. And perhaps it is because I am not a Mrs. Grundy, that I wish Mr. Jones would occasionally forget to be such a perfect gentleman, and that he would, for once, be abandoned in his ecstasies and his passions, that his hand (or that of his hero) would not always “poise” so correctly above “her heart”

... till
(Like a rainbow scattered)
The spell, at a blow of his will,
Was bitterly shattered.

Indeed, so many of the poems poise above love that they are almost adolescent in their shy hovering. Mr. Jones does not halt the maid—he inevitably goes by, and wonders:

Would she have laughed? Or frowned and fled?
Or blushed, and waited?

And, in another poem, the music-box comes to the rescue:

When all her being seemed to glow,
And beg to be caressed,
When dancing threatened faith and trust

[280]

Calm Waters

In one wild flood to drown—
The poor old battered music-box
For good and all ran down.
We laughed: I kissed her hand good night.
Ah, Virtue, take thy crown.

The Blue Ship, the initial poem of the book, is the most successful. It is the story, told almost entirely in blank verse, of a man and a girl hovering (again) around love; or rather, the girl does the hovering. The psychology is excellent throughout, and the story moves smoothly and with interest. I like particularly the speeches of the heroine, and her startlingly realistic soliloquy:

He's honest, he's beguiling . . .
I'll never be his wife.
At least, not now . . . Tomorrow
He'll come and say goodbye.
I'm sorry for his sorrow:
He's not to blame, nor I.
Tomorrow he'll be swearing
He'll never see me more.
What dress shall I be wearing? . . .
He's sworn it twice before.

The shorter poems are very light: easy to read and easy to forget. And *Mary and the Sea-bear—A New-world Fairy-tale* is somewhat too long, in spite of its originality, and certain delightful stanzas, and a very delightful pelican who came

Flying—flap, flap, sail,
And flap again and sail again, Pelican-style.

Marion Strobel

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

FROM THE NINETIES TO THE PRESENT

A Shropshire Lad, by A. E. Housman. Henry Holt & Co.
Poems New and Old, by Henry Newbolt. Dutton & Co.
Poems, with Fables in Prose (2 vols.), by Herbert Trench.
Constable & Co., Ltd.

Later Poems, by Bliss Carman, with an *Appreciation* by
R. H. Hathaway. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.
The Collected Poems of James Elroy Flecker. With an
Introduction by J. C. Squire. Alfred A. Knopf.

"Let us thank God," Hawthorne once said apropos of our Puritan ancestry, "for having given us such ancestors. And let each succeeding generation thank God for being so much the further removed from them." These poets, with the exception of Flecker, are men who struck their pace roughly in the nineties; and though they may write about the Marne or the ravaging of Belgium, they belong to another poetic period than the present. They have standards, but not the standards of today.

Historically, Mr. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* can scarcely be overestimated. Before directness was the fashion, it aimed at and achieved a straightforward simplicity. It stripped away turgid rhetoric and elaborate decoration, relying upon the simple human emotions, plainly expressed, for its effect. And it set a standard of metrical precision which immediate successors could not safely disregard. (Mr. Trench did disregard it, with disastrous results.) At once, and deservedly, the book

From the Nineties to the Present

became a model, and its influence upon the English poets has been amazingly widespread.

But one must keep the historical point in mind to give the book its full due. Today, with a great war just past, one is inclined to comment on the abnormally high mortality rate in Shropshire. Something over half the poems have death in the abstract in the theme; and about a quarter of the poems deal with death in the specific. The gallows is well represented, and one inconsiderate lover cuts his throat "from ear to ear" while in his mistress' arms—after which horror she tastes something salty, and he has time for a speech. The truth is, death with Mr. Housman is not ever death but always the thought of it—he gets the sweeter half of its sorrow and none of its pain. As a result his poems have a true and clear, but a thin emotional base.

His themes, always so purified of any possible pain, are expressed with a direct deftness which is characteristic of the book—and of the standard which it set. One short poem of exile will show the quality of the workmanship.

'Tis time, I think, by Wenlock town
The golden broom should blow;
The hawthorne, sprinkled up and down
Should charge the land with snow.
Spring will not wait the loiterer's time
Who keeps so long away;
So others wear the broom, and climb
The hedgerows heaped with may.
Oh, tarnish late on Wenlock Edge,
Gold that I never see;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Lie long, high snowdrift in the hedge
That will not shower on me.

Notice the preciseness of the accent, the full-stop, compact quatrain, the definitely marked line. There is nothing loose. Tightness characterizes it. And therein, to my mind, lies the chief contrast to be made between the best work of the nineties and of today. The one aims at precision, the other at effectiveness. The one is rather sparing in its use of figures, employs simpler never-complicated comparisons; the other relies upon striking metaphors, explosive effects, only too often overdone.

Mr. Newbolt's work has the same ease and accuracy of expression. It never stumbles, never hesitates. He is at his best in the semi-dramatic pieces. *The Fighting Téméraire* is justly well known, and the refrain of *The Song of the Sou'wester* (indeed all his refrains are good) has a fine rushing swing to it. One can always be sure a poem by Mr. Newbolt will not disappoint—whether it will give the highest esthetic satisfaction or not is another matter.

The work of Mr. Trench is sharply in contrast. His muse in his *Stanzas on Poetry* sets him rather an appalling task which he quite reasonably recoils from. But he has nevertheless a tendency to assume rather pompously the bardic robes. The direct simplicity of *A Shropshire Lad* is alien to him (one finds in his vocabulary such words as *chthonian*, *enorm*, *umbratility*, *augurial*, and *gorges*), and his metres are wooden. On the other hand he makes a bid for the richly sensuous (notably in parts of *Deirdre*

From the Nineties to the Present

Wedded, where he comes nearest success)—something Mr. Housman does not attempt.

From *A Shropshire Lad* to Bliss Carman's *Later Poems* and the work of Flecker is a long journey, but, in the case of Mr. Carman at least, down a fairly straight road. Mr. Housman's volume had a feeling for nature, but chiefly for nature with people in it. Mr. Carman has more of an eye for nature herself and a conventional felicity in description—although there is a touch too much of softness in his view of her. His link with Mr. Housman is again in the precision of his workmanship and a moderately marked affection for the quatrain. This volume, gathered, as I take it, from his later books, shows that he has not been out of touch with developments. There is in it a turning toward the effective figure which is modern.

Gold are the great trees overhead,
And gold the leaf-strewn grass,
As though a cloth of gold were spread
To let a seraph pass.

This has the contemporary touch, as has—

Through the street of St. Germain
March the tattered hosts of rain.

There is no reason why the virtues of this precisely marked rhythm should not be combined with the modern vividness—indeed the trend is toward a reconciliation of the schools. But Mr. Carman has not effected the reconciliation. He belongs to the nineties—with a vigor of his own.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

James Elroy Flecker, the last of these poets whom we have to consider, is at once the youngest and esthetically the finest. The tragedy, too, of incompleteness adds a glamour to his work; for it was only about 1908 that he struck his real pace, and in 1915 he died at thirty-one. The French Parnassians are his avowed models—and he admires them chiefly for the finish of their workmanship. Their doctrine, he thought, would redeem English poetry “from the formlessness and the didactic tendencies which are now [1913] in fashion.” Taking his stand then for a well-controlled expression (his rhythms, like Housman’s, are generally sharply marked) he yet employs exotic material, and he has the current passion for color and ocular vividness—the “statuesque” or picture quality he admires in the Parnassians.

So Flecker, serving in the precision of his form as a link between the 1890’s and the 1920’s, is distinctly a contemporary in spirit (and will people never learn that the contemporary movement is not a question of form but one of vision!). “It is not the poet’s business,” he says, “to save a man’s soul, but to make it worth saving.” And, without didacticism, he turns to beauty.

In the volume are several of Flecker’s translations from the French poets he admired—translations which are brilliant successes. I have not tested their accuracy, but they are fine poetry in the new language, which is mainly to be desired. And this short poem may show something of the nature of Flecker’s own work:

[286]

From the Nineties to the Present

A linnet who had lost her way
Sang on a blackened bough in hell,
Till all the ghosts remembered well
The trees, the wind, the golden day.

At last they knew that they had died
When they heard music in that land,
And someone there stole forth a hand
To draw a brother to his side.

The transition from one century to the next, then, has been marked by a shift in emphasis. A technical preciseness plus the minor chords of emotion is no longer sufficient. Those qualities may and do and ought to exist. But the modernist, before he approves, now looks for something more than mere deftness. A clear-cut image generally indicates a clearly grasped idea, and before there can be vividness—that contemporary fetich—there must usually be vivid feeling.

Royall Snow

CORRESPONDENCE

PARIS NOTES

Jean Cocteau's new book begins with a charming medley of disconnected images:

Arbres, bocal d'oiseaux, feu de bengale, etc.—

but closes with eight-line stanzas that Malherbe might have polished, and four-line stanzas not unlike Gautier's.

Paul Valéry's best productions are crisp flowers of the purest classicism. Valéry and Cocteau—a strange encounter in the noble garden of French verse. Fancy

[287]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

and Meditation go hand in hand under the reconciled gaze of the marble nymphs and fauns. Fancy is younger:

Hélas, je vais avoir trente ans!

But Meditation is wiser. Fancy wants to be taken seriously:

Tel qui jadis me voulut mordre,
Voyant ma figure à l'envers,
Comprendra soudain que mes vers
Furent les serviteurs de l'ordre.

Meditation nods approval: poesy should be "the servant of order." Here we have, expressed by two different poets, an eternal law more obviously put into practice by French poets than by those of any other nation in modern Europe—except Keats maybe. But then Keats is an influence to be reckoned with in tracing the growth of Cocteau and Valéry.

Of *La Pléiade* Valéry may be considered the only one to achieve a perfect success. The Countess de Noailles, in her verbal ecstasy, disregards the thought and cares not for constructive splendor. Mazade's *Ardent Voyage* brings no new coloring: the sun-flooded lines of his Provençal landscape, the glorious remains of the past, the mellow pastel of the Rhone valley sometimes lashed by the wind, he can express with a subtle nicety of rhythm; but, master though he proves of his technique, he lacks a quality possessed in the highest degree by Valéry—the beauty of a form scintillating with thought. Valéry is the idol among his brethren of the *Pléiade*. The Countess,

appalled by Valéry's lyrical discretion, hails him "*Maitre d'un chant nouveau.*"

The themes of the neo-classicists are borrowed from the eternal glamour of nature and love. Following Valéry's sibylline ratiocinations, de Magallon, Reynaud, and a few others take up the philosophical attitude. Naturally enough, the ancient symbols brought down to us by a continuous tradition (Ronsard, La Fontaine, Chénier) still serve to embody the actual modes of feeling. Even catholicism expresses itself through their medium in the work of Reynard. André Lamandé has made a wreath of hyacinths "Under the bright gaze of Athene." (On this point read the enlightening article of Henry Gauthier-Villars in the *Mercur de France* of March 1st, 1922.)

Valéry's versé is the newest form of poetic symbolism. His aloofness reminds the reader of Alfred de Vigny; his diamond-like glitter recalls Mallarmé. Tradition links him back to our very first classicists, Malherbe being the foremost. Malherbe is also the poet whose voice soars and guides the boyish chatter of Fancy in Jean Cocteau's verse (*Vocabulaire*, Edition de la Sirène, Paris). It is reassuring to find a common ancestor to Valéry and Cocteau. Such pieces as:

Et vous, grande âme, espérez-vous un songe
Qui n'aura plus ces couleurs de mensonge
Qu'aux yeux de chair l'onde et l'air font ici?
Chanterez-vous quand serez vaporeuse?
Allez, tout fuit! . . . Ma présence est poreuse,
La sainte impatience meurt aussi!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

have the smooth polish of the Malherbian marble, veined
by the very blood of the heart.

Such lines as:

La jeunesse me quitte et j'ai son coup reçu. . . .

or

Nous sommes tellement proche la douce vie
Qu'à peine par la mort elle nous est ravie;
Elle ouvre le passage et nous lâche la main. . . .

avowedly borrow archaic forms from the poet of *Odes*
(1600).

Cocteau carves the roses of his fancy into stone before
they slip between his youthful fingers. Valéry brings forth,
out of the solitude where he studied mathematics, resplend-
ent numbers with which he rebuilds his soul. I do not
think Valéry would like Cocteau's smiles and premature
sadness. I do not think Cocteau would follow Valéry
under the Greek porticoes. And yet Narcissus is a symbol
to both of them. This is from *Vocabulaire*:

Comme une grande soif de lumière
Narcisse penché sur une eau,
Où se voyait de bas en haut.

While Valéry confesses:

Nulle des nymphes, nulle amie ne m'attire,
Comme tu fais, sur l'onde, inépuisable moi.

I know that there are a few *deliberately* imitative lines
in Cocteau's *Vocabulaire*. I also know that Ronsard and
Malherbe are the chosen poets of Cocteau's artistic
predilection and standard.

Reflection brings amusement and unrest to Cocteau, and to Valéry the pride and ennui of the sage. Jean Cocteau remains what he always was, an exquisite ironist, akin to Watteau or Boucher, with the sensuality of the latter and the risky innuendo of the former. To the rustle of silk and the minuet of the violins, Cocteau adds the organ of the merry-go-rounds. All this music, even occasionally swelling into a jazz-band crash, is today's laughter just emerging out of an heroic gloom.

Jean Catel

NOTES

The fact that this is a woman's number of POETRY does not result from the editor's deliberate intention. As most of the contributors had been promised space this month, it seemed wise to postpone the one or two masculine poets at first scheduled, and to present exclusively the feminine claim to variety of method and mood in this art. Quite a number of issues, during our past history, have been masculine, but this is the first one to speak entirely with feminine voices.

Muna Lee (Mrs. Luiz Munoz-Marin) lived in Oklahoma when she first appeared in POETRY and received, in 1916, a prize awarded "for a lyric poem." After her marriage she resided for awhile in Porto Rico at her husband's birthplace, but since returning to this country a year ago the family have lived in Teaneck, N. J. Her first book of verse will be published by the Macmillan Co. this autumn.

Miss Elizabeth Madox Roberts will also present her first book this autumn—*Under the Tree*, to be published by B. W. Huebsch. After a residence of some years in Chicago as a student at the University, she has now returned to her family home at Springfield, Kentucky.

Miss Florence Ripley Mastin, of Brooklyn, N. Y., is the author of *Green Leaves* (James T. White & Co.).

Mrs. Katherine Wisner McCluskey, of Phoenix, Arizona, has not yet published a volume.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Jessica Nelson North (Mrs. R. T. MacDonald), of Chicago, was recently president of the progressive little Poetry Club of the University of Chicago.

Miss Hilda Conkling, who will be twelve years old next October, has hitherto appeared in POETRY's child section—a feature of each July issue from 1915 to 1919, since which date we have received no poems of good enough quality from children under ten. Miss Conkling, who now makes her début among the grown-ups, is the author of *Poems by a Little Girl*, published in 1920 by the Fred. A. Stokes Co., and a second volume will appear this autumn.

Miss Louise Bogan, who appears for the first time in POETRY, is a native of Maine who has lived in Panama and New York, and is now sojourning in Vienna.

Miss Louise S. Hammond has been for some years a missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church at its station in Wusih, China. She is a sister of Mrs. Eunice Tietjens Head, and a musician as well as a linguist.

Baylor College for Women, of Belton, Texas (not to be confused with Baylor University, of Waco, Texas), held recently a High School Poetry Contest, which was open to all high school girls in the state. The judges were Dr. L. W. Payne, Jr., Dr. J. B. Wharey, and Dr. A. C. Judson, all members of the faculty of the University of Texas; and there were about one hundred contestants. The winners of first and second places received cash prizes, while the third, fourth and fifth awards were a year's subscription to POETRY. Thus we welcome three young Texas girls to our roll of subscribers, and commend to other schools the example of this contest, the results of which, as Mr. Wm. H. Vann, head of the college's English department, writes, "have proved very gratifying, such as to warrant us in making it a permanent thing."

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Selected Poems of Laurence Binyon. Macmillan Co.
Moonlight and Common Day, by Louise Morey Bowman. Macmillan Co.
Variations on a Theme, by Grace Hazard Conkling. The Carolina Press, Charleston, S. C.

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Ford Madox Hueffer in the New York Evening Post Literary Review.

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The Daily Journal, East St. Louis

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From an editorial in the New York Sunday Tribune.

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No. VI

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Edited by Harriet Monroe

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| | PAGE |
|--|----------------------------|
| Ridge People | Laura Sherry 293 |
| My Country—A Native—Nothin', Somethin'—Howard Bently—Grand-dad's Bluff—In Mist—Light Magic—Late Autumn in the Hills—The Season | |
| Antagonisms | Emmy Veronica Sanders 300 |
| Laughter—Into These Things—Passing—Hill Speech | |
| Two Sonnets | Louis Grudin 306 |
| Anguish | Sally Bruce Kinsolving 307 |
| Reflections | Leonora Speyer 308 |
| Duets—At the Hospital for the Insane—Song Overheard—Kind Fate—The Stronghold—Looking On—A Truth about a Lie—Couplets | |
| Shadow Songs | Iris Barry 312 |
| Lamentation—Virgin Moon—An Unposted Letter—Nocturne | |
| A Trifoliate | Leon Herald 314 |
| Beauty—My Wedding—In Your Eyes | |
| Triad | Arthur H. Nethercot 316 |
| A Walking Poem | Edward Sapir 317 |
| Poems | Yoor Winters 318 |
| The Little Deity Alone in the Desert—Late Winter—A Requiem for the Memory of Bees—Chicago Spring—Old Spring—The Silent Days—Lament beside an Acequia—"The Fragile Season." | |
| Mea Culpa | H. M. 323 |
| On Translating Chinese Poetry II | Eunice Tietjens 328 |
| Reviews: | |
| His Home Town | H. M. 332 |
| Muriel Stuart | Marion Strobel 338 |
| Tranquil Tunes | Marion Strobel 340 |
| One Poet Speaks for Himself | Pearl Andelson 342 |
| Teacher and Critic | Nelson Antrim Crawford 344 |
| Asia | Emanuel Carnevali 346 |
| Notes and Books Received | 349; 350 |

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Doetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XX
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SEPTEMBER 1922

RIDGE PEOPLE

MY COUNTRY

THEY were my people,
And this country was my country.

Deep ravines
Send strange shadows into the valley.
Rock ridges
Bulwark returning ferns and flowers.
Rock towers
Watch the invading shadows.

Hills mother children.
Hills watch while children sleep.

Fathomed in coulees,
The spirit water-falls
Say all there is to say.

[293]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A NATIVE

There ain't no poetry
Like these middlin' hills
And a slow stream gurglin' over stones.
Them pines has lived four hundred years
And asked nothin' of no one.
Straight and tall and strong—
Nothin' crooked about a pine.
Religion, I call it,
Pointing to the sky
And slinging incense free.
Did you ever hear
A cedar valley moan a dirge
Or sing an anthem?

NOTHIN'—SOMETHIN'

It ain't worth nothin' as land goes,
And yet it's somethin'.
Kinda nice—
A hill of boulders
Smilin' in the sun.
I only took it because 'twas cheap.
I wasn't one of them
That had the earnin' guts
To pick and choose.
My girl and I have worked

[294]

Laura Sherry

To coax the crops around these stones.
She was pretty once—
Lord, now her bones stick out
Like ridge-poles in a tent.
I ain't complainin'.
The land—
She'd say it wasn't any good
Except to hold the world together.
It's held her
And me.

HOWARD BENTLY

Jim Burgantine said,
"If any other man had tried
To put over a plug hat
In this Western burg
He'd a been egged."

Howard Bently
Didn't follow fashion.
He brought his hat from Massachusetts—
It was a good hat
And lasted forty years.
For the matter of that,
Eight months of the calendar
He didn't wear a hat;
He never did unnecessary things.

[295]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

He split a cracker
If the scales tipped over a pound.
He split a cracker
If the scales tipped under a pound.
When a neighbor was sick
He sat up nights,
And took the orphans home.

Twenty-five thousand dollars,
Earned in his corner grocery,
Was scattered about the country
Among the struggling farmers.
Howard Bently died
Without trying to collect.

He never said unnecessary words—
F'e was a quiet man.
No tombstone
Shouts his name above the sod.

GRAND-DAD'S BLUFF

I knelt all day,
Grand-dad,
Pleading with you—
But you had nothing to say.
Night fell,
And a message came
Through your ravines.

[296]

Laura Sherry

It did not speak either,
But I heard it pass among the leaves of the trees.
I drank it through my nostrils
As one drinks wine through the mouth,
And it tingled to the finger-tips of my spirit.
I came to you, Grand-dad, with my heart.
God bless you, Grand-dad.

IN MIST

When you can see the ground's breath,
And the sky goes muggy
And drops before the world
Like a perspiring window-glass;
When beasts and humans creep to cover
And the steam-boats speak fog-language;
The farm buildings sit still
Folding their hands
As if they hadn't a thing in the world to do.
A chimney's belch smudges into nothing;
The earth's breath noses around the roots of trees;
Heaven-mist seeps through branches
And wraps the country's heart.

LIGHT MAGIC

The valley curves like a bridge-span to the sky.
Blue granite stew-pans spill pink begonias along the road.

[297]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The town hall, blazing red, focuses the red stubble of the
fields

Which stretch away to gold-stacked corn-stalks,
And Wisconsin hills—piled cubes of red and yellow.
The sunset catches the landscape in layers.
Its amber floats a banner of pastels around the town.

LATE AUTUMN IN THE HILLS

A flock of birds
Spurts down the trail of autumn.

Bare hills
Wrap fog-blankets about them,
And nod. . . .

A whirl of wind
Scatters wild rice over the lake.

There is a shake of snow in the air.
My boat moors in the sedges.

My hand
Droops over the side of the boat.
My fingers
Touch a lotus pod.
The seeds rattle in the husk.

Autumn is anchored.

Laura Sherry

THE SEASON

It is mating time—
How can I go gipsying?

It is planting time—
How can I go adventuring?

It is harvest time—
In the twilight the camp-fire smoulders;
On the hearth-stone
Ashes hold memories.

It is dying time—
And the unknown road.

Laura Sherry

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ANTAGONISMS

LAUGHTER

See!

I thrust at you laughter—
Clusters of pomegranate in the sun.

See!

I dangle clusters of red sun-ripened laughter
Before your eyes, that are colorless
Like the eyes of the fishes.

What are you peering at,
Sallow-face?
Your hand—
It is limp and clammy;
It has never clutched at a thing
Strongly.

Those pale pinched lips of yours
Have never blossomed under kisses,
Have never whispered little words
Luminous with tenderness.

Rigid one!
My laughter,
Let it shake you like a wind—
Red wind
Tearing to shreds
Your pale hypocrisy.

[300]

Emmy Veronica Sanders

My laughter,
Let it thaw
Those boulders of black ice—
Your hard moralities,
Your bleak utilities—
And sow violets in their place.

There is laughter ringing softly
From the golden shell of the sky.
There is laughter ringing in the rills
That come tripping down the bronze and purple hillside
Insolently.
Trees are swaying to and fro,
Laughter in the rustle and the flitter of their leaves.
And the air is warm and tremulous with laughter
Rising from the lips that lie
Mute beneath tombstones.

Deaf one,
Listen
To the scarlet wind!

There are sobs in the wind.

INTO THESE THINGS

The grasp of their hands has grown cold.
Furnaces needed
Red fire.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Their little souls,
Their cowardly cramped souls—
Bigness went
To steel and to stone.

Slow and feeble their breath.
Do you hear the white steam
Panting?

There is no music in their hearts.
Engines know rhythm,
Engines make
Loudness.

If their eyes are
Without longing,
Do not numbers
Create themselves?

And if their lips show not
The deep proud curve of passion,
Are not cities
Passionate?

Furnaces, steel towers, engines, cities—
And the pale-eyed people crawling,
Emptied
Into these things.

PASSING

I am tired of roads.
I am tired of the going—the going;
And I am tired of passing people.

In the east a narrow streak of gold
And the flutter of wings of the little desires.
Bleakness of snow in the north
And in the south the taste of ashes on hot lips.
Westward a loneliness.
Roads over sand, and roads over snow, and roads across
rivers.

I am tired of roads.
I am tired of the going—the going;
And I am tired of passing people.

I am tired of passing them on the glistening pavements
under the lamplight
And in the places where you order things to eat.
I am tired of passing them at noon under the flat stare of
the sun
And in the street-cars, the elevated trains and the taxis.
Passing glances and feet passing—
Feet of six million people passing and gliding by,
Shuffling and jostling by—
Passing—passing;
And those that pass on the screen in the movies,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And the people that pass—slowly—hurriedly—
With a half-caught gest through the pages of books.

I am tired of the winds that hasten by,
And of the little waves that skip and never once look back,
And of stars coming and going.

Fleeting glimpses—
Hands fluttering past like autumn leaves. . . .

I am tired of roads.
I am tired of the going—the going;
And I am tired of passing people.

HILL SPEECH

I listened to the hills as they spoke
At nightfall.

I listened to the haughty calm flowing of line speech,
And to vehement words
Jagged and bitten into the sky face.
I saw hieroglyphs scrawled on a pale wall of sky
With fingers of granite.
There was motion gripping the masses
Urging and waving
Onward.
I heard cadences of hill speech

Emmy Veronica Sanders

Falling and rising
Softly,
With soothing interference.

And there was one standing alone on the smoldering
horizon,
Standing aloof and detached
Always;
Saying "I" and "I" and "I,"
Answering "No" and "No" and "No"—
Always—
To the biting words and to the flowing line speech,
And to the hieroglyphs scrawled with fingers of granite.

There was one
Saying "No"
To the dull gray abysses
Of sky and of sea—
Saying "No"
To the masses. . . .

Emmy Veronica Sanders

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

TWO SONNETS

"ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME"

She bore the smear of insult on her face,
And heard the ruffian voices, and the din
Of penny horns and whistles that had been
Her heart; and she knew only this disgrace—

That one had dressed her in a ragged gown.
Caesar had been met in various ways;
Like thought too vast to feel or to erase,
She knew the hosts of Rome were sweeping down

In various fashions Caesar had been met—
With crimson violence or more brilliant lies,
The poisoned fang, or chain of chariot.
She did not choose, but slain by her surprise,
She could not see the choice that waited yet—
The veiled, derisive, plebeian disguise.

JEST

In a gutter between wind-bitten glaciers,
A little man stands, blowing upon a toy.
Is he not mad—is he not audacious,
In such a curious place, in such employ?

The wind's blue insult swells upon his face.
A whisking hunger, like a mouse at bay,

[306]

Louis Grudin

Has cowed his eyes which, vaguely in disgrace,
Bear up the heavy menace of Broadway.

A dim presentiment of an awful hoax
Scalded his heart and simmered to his feet—
The secret jest that counted off the strokes
Of hours men spent at various tasks secrete,
That made of some of them quite obvious jokes,
And saved for others labors more discreet.

Louis Grudin

ANGUISH

Pain is cutting through my heart,
Like a thin knife,
With the keen abiding smart
Men call life.

Pillowed cool in marble state,
Ah, let me sleep;
And afar from love or hate
Bury me deep.

Sally Bruce Kinsolving

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

REFLECTIONS

DUET

(I sing with myself)

Out of my sorrow
I'll build a stair,
And every tomorrow
Will climb to me there;
*With ashes of yesterday
In its hair.*

My fortune is made
Of a stab in the side,
My debts are paid
In pennies of pride:
*Little red coins
In a heart I hide.*

The stones that I eat
Are ripe for my needs;
My cup is complete
With the dregs of deeds.
*Clear are the notes
Of my broken reeds.*

I carry my pack
Of aches and stings,
Light with the lack
Of all good things;

[308]

Leonora Speyer

*But not on my back,
Because of my wings!*

AT THE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE

They said to me: "We are not crazy, dear!
But *they* are mad . . . and so they keep us here."

I thought: "We are all mad!—in this walled place,
And out beyond, and through all time and space;
Save he who looks his madness in the face!"

SONG OVERHEARD

I wrote your name within my heart
Most carefully—
I never could remember names or faces;
And then, one day,
I lost my heart along the shining places.

I must have let it fall,
Plucking a flower I did not want
And listening to a bird I did not see:
Now would I call—
And you would answer me.

Do hearts have wings?
I am so careless about losing things.

[309]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

KIND FATE

You strike at hearts of gentle ways;
And in their grief they give you praise.

Once, once you struck at me . . .
And will not strike again.
You do not like to bruise your hands
On hearts that hoard their bright hard pain.

THE STRONGHOLD

Here he lies
Under the solemn stones,
Secure from Life—a little while;
Old Death,
With his ready smile,
Busy among his bones.

LOOKING ON

I urged my mind against my will:
My will shook like a rocking wall,
But did not fall;
My mind was like a wind-swept tree,
And neither knew the victory.

I dashed my mind against my will:
They did not break or bend or spill,
But in my heart the songs grew still.

[310]

Leonora Speyer

A TRUTH ABOUT A LIE

I lied, trusting you knew
I could not lie to you.
Beloved friend, I lied and am forgiven; but I
Cannot forgive that you believed my lie.

COUPLETS

Forest Fires

Summer is burning! From trees' red crown
Ashes of June pour hotly down.

Night of Stars

They crowded round me more and more;
I had to shove to shut the door.

Ascent

Mountains take too much time.
Start at the top and climb.

Reproach

You gave me wings to fly;
Then took away my sky.

Down to the Heights

In the deep valleys, and deeper still,
I found my heights . . . against my will.

Leonora Speyer

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

SHADOW SONGS

LAMENTATION

Chrysanthemums and late roses
And the plane-leaf's fall—
All that is left us now.
Hoarsely the flower-girls cry,
Pale shake the street-lamp lights;
Chilled gusts come puffing by,
Sigh the poor year away.
All that is left us now
Regrets without perfume; dead thoughts;
Chrysanthemums, and late roses.

VIRGIN MOON

Having chattered out
The overbrimming of their light hearts,
When the old moon had traveled over the housetops
Far enough to dangle dancing shadows of leaves
Across their bed,
Veils of silence also were let down,
And they slept, virgin beside virgin.
The whisper of leaves outside the window
Filled the room
Long after the moon had trailed
Her net of shadow-boughs across their dreams
And was gone.

Iris Barry

AN UNPOSTED LETTER

How bitter must the smile
Of the wise Future be
Behind her veil!
O letter of last year,
Can my hopes and aims,
 Like moons,
Have changed so?
Those dead desires,
Like shriveled fruits,
Hang, shamed,
On the bough of time.

NOCTURNE

The veil of light slipped
From the sky:
Only greyness.
And in the valley
One home light—
Not mine.

I most remember, then,
Shadows of boughs
Lattice-wise falling
On white walls
Of my home
Beneath the moon.

Iris Barry

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

A TRIFOLIATE

BEAUTY

Over beauty I am a weeping willow.
I begged of God to grant me a look at beauty,
And He sent me traveling a billion years
To come to this world.
I came my way an empty vessel, longing for beauty.
I shall go my way fulfilled, glorifying beauty.

When I look on beauty
I secure a day's provision;
Thus I accumulate food for another billion years.
When I see beauty
It propels wheels in me,
And puts me in communication with God instantly,
To thank Him that I am arrived.

My only grief in life is to see a thing without beauty.
Over beauty I am a weeping willow.

MY WEDDING

My adopted little sister-dreams,
As soon as they heard
The wedding news of their brother,
Shouted: "Brother, our brother,
You have cared for and sustained us
All our painful lives.

Leon Herald

For this hour we have been waiting,
The hour of our culmination.
Brother, you were betrothed when you were born."
Then they danced alone to the garden
To gather star-daisies.

Now comes the lady of my heart
In her purple-bordered, lightning-colored gown.
The maiden Day, in whom I breathe, comes
With the sun-bouquet at her breast;
Led by my sister-dreams, the maids of honor.
And Life, the best man, leads me to her.

The pagan musicians Ocean and Wind!
Ocean the pianist, with jeweled and manicured fingers,
Thunders and pounds the wide-ranged key-board of the
shore;
And the Wind, with hair unbound,
Holding the violin-woods under her chin,
Thrills my bride and her maids of honor,
And Life my best man,
And me.

IN YOUR EYES

To M. H.

Never before did I dare
To look in your eyes.
To see one's self
In love's mystic eyes

[315]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Is leading
Life in Paradise.

(Creator dreamed
And looked deep in space.
Then Being, the grace of His dream,
Began to evolve.
Thus He became famous,
And God is His name.)

When the light from my eyes
Falls in yours,
Immortal songs will take course—
Tuneful songs, the grace of my dreams.

Leon Herald

TRIAD

In the church of St. Pierre, August, 1918

Old music wove its beauty through each word
Which echoed from the chancel down the nave.

Old beauty of fled twilights stained each beam,
Carved like the fingers of some soul in prayer.

A woman veiled in black knelt on the stone,
The beauty of old suffering on her face.

Arthur H. Nethercot

[316]

A WALKING POEM

I believe there is moving more than colored jackets
Down the street among the city rackets.
I do not think the sun-rain on the corner wall
Is all.

I cannot think the swirl is much
More than a little touch
Of souls, to steady to an equipoise
Their private thunderings, the subterranean noise.

For I have gathered scowl and elbow-thrust
And glint of pupil of the eye; there must,
I think, be lashing foam in canyons under there,
And this a heavy silence on the little empty air.

I do not think her ankles mincing through,
And round smile, are the flowers that we thought we knew.
Red jacket—stealthy lioness yawning in the wood,
And stealthy passion creeping in the blood.

The sun moves, and the colors of the air.
I think each canyon-river keeps its flowing there
Within the deepest constancy.
Call then the sun and jackets pageantry.

Edward Sapir

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

POEMS

THE LITTLE DEITY ALONE IN THE DESERT

My life is here
A contemplation of slow days and distant women.

Women standing in the sky-line
As if about to turn into their shawls and leave
 their doorways.

The illimitable movement of my hand
Across the desert
Contrives against their motions and my being.

LATE WINTER

The duller plains of dawn
 near this
Gray 'dobe of bare fruit-trees—

 hesitant
A foot upon the sill.

A REQUIEM FOR THE MEMORY OF BEES

Lake Michigan

A brown flowering tree
On twilight
Was but a farther spinning of
 the sprinkled blackbirds.

[318]

Yoor Winters

A woman walking,
The evening dying.
Her dress among low blossoms.

Among low blossoms
Lake water humming.

CHICAGO SPRING

Before returning to Santa Fe

I walk on the streets
Before nightfall—
The lake clear and still
Between young leaves.

My body is gentle
As the light on the pavement.
My fingers play on the air
Like evening wind running in leaves.

But there is no one—
Only return,
Only old roads of last summer,
An old fence like dead leaves.

The hand of God
Is heavier than mountains.
It stands on the air
Like an odor.

[319]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

OLD SPRING

The flowering crabtrees
Have melted like the twilights.

Here a brown road
Dull amid bark shadows
And an old man walking—

And between the woods
The dandelions
Like dried scattered leaves.

But in my country
The spring is old.
The violet and red
Are laid in earth,
Will not be lost.

And I there, standing,
Or moving slowly.

THE SILENT DAYS

Here men go
In and out of doors
And women stand—

Beneath dry trees
A child drifts and is still.

[320]

With brevity
Men break a bitter bread.

My books
Are fallen leaves—
I, unidentified,
As books passed by at will.

LAMENT, BESIDE AN ACEQUIA, FOR THE WIFE OF
AWA-TSIREH

Two caballeros,
Smooth in the valley,
Laughed—their horses bucked.
The summer foaming.

San Ildefonso
In colors
Faint as dust—
Flower-dripping dancers—
One cannot think
So far away.

And thinking,
Women die,
O Awa-tsirch!

The faded roads
May never move.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

"THE FRAGILE SEASON"

The scent of summer thins,
The air grows cold.

One walks alone
And chafes one's hands.

The fainter aspens
Thin to air.

 The dawn
Is frost on roads.

This ending of the year
Is like the lacy ending
 of a last year's leaf
Turned up in silence.

Air gives way to cold.

Yvor Winters

COMMENT

MEA CULPA

WITH this number POETRY completes a decade—October first it will be ten years old. The eve of one's birthday may be the appropriate moment for reflection and more or less penitential confession.

Mea culpa—so the orthodox confession begins; with a humble mind must one approach the sacred closet. And the mood is not difficult, considering how frequently we are prodded toward humility. "You have wasted a great opportunity," writes one correspondent. "You are possibly five per cent better than *The Century*," says another—no less trenchant an authority than Ezra Pound. "I have loved POETRY, but your disparagement of the great Rostand makes me wish I had a five-year subscription to withdraw," deposes a third. "Will you never stop dealing out free verse and pretending it is poetry?" cries a fourth. And a fifth complains that only the rhymers' tinkle rings through our pages now.

All this—and much more—on the artistic side. Of course we might put up a defence, setting forth our manifold achievements; but that would not be fitting in a penitent. And the editor realizes only too deeply the magazine's many errors and derelictions; whatever it has done for the cause, unquestionably it might have done much more under the all-wise guidance of complete and perfect competence.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

But it is on the business side that the editor is most sincerely penitent and humble: here, somehow or other, we have indeed missed our opportunity—we have not persuaded the poetry-loving public to subscribe in sufficient numbers to support the magazine. Ten years ago our guarantors—more than an hundred they were then—accepted the responsibility of a rash experiment for the benefit of an art then neglected and decried. It seemed reasonable to hope that within five years a circulation of ten thousand or more would assure the magazine's continuance by making it modestly self-supporting. Now that twice five years have passed there is still no prospect of the fulfilment of this hope; the future of the magazine is precarious because it still rests on the generosity and continued loyalty of its guarantors.

The editor accuses herself. If she had had a small modicum of ordinary business instinct, she might have found a larger "audience" and rallied it to the support of the poets' organ—for, imperfect as it may be, *POETRY* is, by general consent, the leading organ of the art in the English-speaking world. There must be at least ten thousand people in this country who would wish to help support this organ if we could reach them and persuade them of their need of it, of the country's need of it. But unfortunately we have not known how to reach out and persuade. Small advertising, in these days of enormous expenditures for publicity, is simply money wasted. Circularizing, in these days of over-burdened

mails, doesn't pay for the stamps on the envelopes. Yet the public has become so accustomed to the advertiser's dope that they rely on it like a morphine-eater, and pay no attention to those who do not supply, in conspicuous and never-ceasing profusion, the artificial stimulus.

What is to be done? The editor confesses frankly that she does not know. The magazine ought to go on, it would be bitterly missed—this seems beyond question if one may believe the proofs that come by every mail, and the emphatic assurances of people who know the work it is doing. Its influence is out of proportion to its subscription list, because it is widely quoted by the newspapers and is used *in extenso* by all the innumerable modern anthologists; not to mention the young men and women far and near who receive from it their first stimulus toward artistic expression, and feed their souls on it, often in remote corners of this vast country and against formidable spiritual isolation.

The editor is tempted to quote here an editorial which appeared in the magazine eight years ago this month. By this time we should have outgrown the need of it, but, *mea culpa*, it is as true now as it was then. It was entitled *A Word to Our Readers*:

Are you convinced of the value of our unique experiment for the support and encouragement of a universal and indispensable art? Do you wish the magazine to continue beyond the period for which it is subsidized? Do you wish its policy to be one of increasing liberality toward the poets and their public, working always toward more just appreciation and recompense for the former, and for the latter a presentation of the best the art has to offer?

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The permanence of the magazine lies not with us, but with you. Given life and health, we can pledge to its support our best service, and—under the usual limitations of human error—increasing knowledge and efficiency; for there is much education in such work as this. But our labor will not avail for permanence unless we can reach the public for poetry which must exist in this vast country, and in the wide provinces of the English-speaking world. And we can not find that public unless you help us.

We must be advertised by our friends. Other advertising, in these days of enormously expensive displays of it, is costly and often futile. We have preferred to reserve our endowment fund for our contributors, the poets, in order to increase the intrinsic value of the magazine. The direct advertisement of recommendation is the only possible means of increasing its scope and influence.

Thus you, and you alone, can give us really effective aid toward reaching a circulation large enough to enable us to stand alone. You can help us in any or all of the following ways:

First, send or renew your own subscription.

Second, persuade one or more of your friends and neighbors to subscribe.

Third, see that your social and literary clubs subscribe.

Fourth, see that the public library in your town carries one or more subscriptions.

Fifth, talk about the magazine; either praise or blame will indicate your interest.

To those who wish to give more to the magazine than the amount of their subscription, we extend a cordial invitation to join our body of guarantors. Full guarantors pay fifty dollars a year, or in a few instances one hundred. They receive the magazine each month, as many copies as they order, and full reports once a year. Like members of art institutes, and of operatic, dramatic and orchestral societies, like donors of prizes and scholarships in schools and exhibitions of painting, sculpture, architecture and music; like these, our guarantors are patrons of a great art, one which, equally with the other arts, needs public encouragement, and even endowment, if it is to achieve its triumphs. By encouraging the art, by staking something on their faith in those who practice it, they increase their own enjoyment of it, and receive

perhaps more than they give, so that the adventure is of mutual benefit.

Another way of contributing largely is to offer a prize. This way is recommended especially to clubs. We should like to give as many prizes annually as the Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh or the Art Institute of Chicago.

In this art an urgent need is for the endowment of scholarships, especially traveling scholarships. The modern world—modern thought and art—is cosmopolitan. A young poet, even more than a young aspirant in the other arts, needs a certain amount of cosmopolitan training and experience. For the lack of it he may develop narrowly, remaining provincial and laggard-minded. It is an incredible and inexcusable omission that the expensively endowed American Academy at Rome does not include poets among the young artists it subsidizes; indeed, they are precisely the ones who would perhaps benefit the most by a few years' residence in Rome. The editor has in mind now three or four promising young poets to whom a scholarship would be of incalculable benefit.

Many inspiring words encouraged me while I was explaining the project of the magazine to possible guarantors. One of these, a Chicago lawyer, said, "Of course put me down—I don't know any better way to pay my debt to Shelley." What do you owe, you who read this article, to Shelley? to Coleridge, Milton, Shakespeare? to Molière, Dante, Sappho, Homer? to all the great poets whose immortal singing has incalculably enriched life, become an integral part of the mind of the race? Have you ever felt an obligation to pay a little of that immeasurable debt? Is there any other way to pay your debt to the great dead poets than by supporting and encouraging the poets now alive? Among them may be the founders of a renaissance, among them may be an immortal. In a sense not only actual and immediate, but permanent, mystic and profound, their fate is in your hands.

Like many another penitent confessing his sins, the editor ends with a nefarious attempt to shift, or at least to share, responsibility. She does not know how to make the magazine self-supporting—do you?

H. M.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ON TRANSLATING CHINESE POETRY

II

Probably most of us met these poems first in the translations by scholars—Herbert A. Giles of Cambridge or Legge of Oxford. Legge's translations are in scrupulous prose, Giles' in rhymed verse which Arthur Waley says "combines rhyme and literalness with wonderful dexterity." Giles' translations are the more widely known, but are now rather scoffed at by many of the newer school of poets. In justice to Giles, however, it must be remembered that at least the greater part of these translations appeared in 1896, before the present movement towards simplification of poetry was started, and before the English poets themselves had discovered that English may be used with classic simplicity. They are therefore in a poetic idiom foreign to our day. But we owe Giles none the less a great debt of gratitude on this as well as on other scores.

In 1913 Helen Waddell published a slender volume, *Lyrics from the Chinese*—the first translations into English, so far as my knowledge goes, which belong to the new movement in English poetry. They are done from Legge's literal translations, and although they have never been so generally known as they deserve to be, they seem to me to controvert the claim made by the publishers of Amy Lowell's and Florence Ayscough's new volume, *Fir-flower Tablets*, that "This is the first time that an English version of Chinese poems has been

On Translating Chinese Poetry

at once the work of a sinologue and a poet." They are in rhymed verse as direct as Sara Teasdale's lyrics, and to me often very beautiful. Here, for instance, is her version of one of the odes:

How say they that the Ho is wide,
When I could ford it if I tried?
How say they Sung is far away,
When I can see it every day?
Yet must indeed the Ho be deep
When I have never dared to leap;
And since I am content to stay,
Sung must be very far away.

If one bears in mind the fact that the original is rhymed and patterned, does Miss Lowell's new free-verse version, with its American colloquialisms, seem an improvement?

Who says the Ho is wide?
Why, one little reed can bridge it.
Who says that Sung is far?
I stand on tiptoe and see it.
Who says the Ho is wide?
Why, the smallest boat cannot enter.
Who says that Sung is far?
It takes not a morning to reach it.

L. Cranmer-Byng, with his *A Lute of Jade* and *A Feast of Lanterns*, struck a more popular chord, and it is perhaps a personal matter that they do not move me as the Waddell translations do. They are partially rhymed and partially unrhymed. To me it seems that they are not

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

quite one thing or the other, neither very good English verse nor very scrupulous translations.

Another interesting, though slightly Latinized, volume is Whitall's rendering of the French versions of Judith Gautier's *Le Livre de Jade*. And we have had other sorts of translations: the airy snatches of Ezra Pound some years ago, who chose a single image that pleased him from a long poem and gave us that only; the fantasies of E. Powys Mathers, so over-decorated as to be genuinely dishonest, the dreadful doggerel of W. A. P. Martin, the trite and wearisome mouthings of Charles Budd, not to mention the numerous "interpretations."

Then came Arthur Waley's admirable translations, at once so simple and so scholarly, carrying with them an instant conviction of authenticity. This, we felt, was the substance and spirit of these old poets at last.

Yet, such is the carping nature of mankind, we no sooner had so much than we began to wish for the magic also. For Mr. Waley's word sense, excellent as it is, still falls short of the ultimate subtlety of magic. It is probably with the hope of restoring this magic that Amy Lowell with Florence Ayscough, and Witter Bynner with Dr. Kiang Kang-hu, have now taken up the work. Miss Lowell's book is a welcome addition, since it gives us many new and charming poems in a contemporary technique. Yet I for one cannot quite trust Miss Lowell. She has given us so many racial interpretations—Japanese, Indian and others—which were all essentially herself,

On Translating Chinese Poetry

that when I find that this too reads like her own poems I doubt their essentially Chinese quality. She has surely too vivid a personality to make a good translator. Mr. Bynner's book is not yet out, but from the examples I have seen it promises to be the most satisfying of the free-verse translations in the matter of magic.

Such, roughly, is the history of the recent attempts to translate Chinese classical poetry into English. Let me give, for comparison, three different versions of the same poem. It is by the Lady Pan Chieh-Yu, chief favorite of the emperor who ruled China B. C. 36-32 and was sent him with a fan by the lady when she had been supplanted by a younger rival. The first translation is by Giles, in his history of Chinese literature:

O fair white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom,
Clear as the frost, bright as the winter snow—
See! friendship fashions out of thee a fan,
Round as the round moon shines in heaven above;
At home, abroad, a close companion thou,
Stirring at every move the grateful gale.
And yet I fear—ah me!—that autumn chills,
Cooling the dying summer's torrid rage,
Will see thee laid neglected on the shelf,
All thought of bygone days like them bygone.

Here is Ezra Pound's version—he does not call it a translation—of the same, from the first Imagist anthology:

O fan of white silk
clear as frost on the grass-blade,
You also are laid aside.

The third is Amy Lowell's, from *Fir-flower Tablets*:

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Glazed silk, newly cut, smooth, glittering, white,
As white, as clear, even as frost and snow.
Perfectly fashioned into a fan,
Round, round, like the brilliant moon,
Treasured in my Lord's sleeve, taken out, put in—
Wave it, shake it, and a little wind flies from it.
How often I fear the autumn season's coming,
And the fierce, cold wind that scatters the blazing heat.
Discarded, passed by, laid in a box alone;
Such a little time, and the thing of love cast off.

Perhaps by comparing the three the western reader may arrive at some idea of what the Chinese poem is like, as a surveyor, by taking three slants at a mountain, can measure it. And if he adds thereto a knowledge of the complex form in which it is written, he may even get a fairly correct idea. It is a laborious process, but can one who does not read Chinese find a better?

Eunice Tietjens

REVIEWS

HIS HOME TOWN

Slabs of the Sun-burnt West, by Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

The books of this man are piling up. *Chicago Poems*, *Cornhuskers*, *Smoke and Steel*, and now these *Slabs*—all these since that day in 1914 when, unknown to fame, he stormed POETRY's doors and picked up the first Levinson Prize, thereby exciting a loud hee-haw of protest from the arbiters of taste; indeed, all these since 1916,

when the first book was published. Eight years, and the arbiters of taste have come round, so that two of these books have been beprized without arousing their derision. Eight years, and this radical of 1914 is becoming *vieux jeu* to the young radicals of 1922, who would elbow him out of the muses' presence even as he unwittingly elbowed out Neihardt and George Sterling and Madison Cawein.

What of this fourth book?—does it keep up the pace? Well, any book which contains *The Windy City* and *Washington Monument by Night* can not be said to show a flagging of poetic energy. The former is more compact, more definitely planned and shaped, than either *Prairie* or *Smoke and Steel*, and it carries its big subject through-out with an assured and easy power. It is perhaps too early to say whether it contains passages of such imaginative intensity as a few in these other two long poems—for example, the finale of *Prairie*, with the line, "The past is a bucket of ashes"; but it does achieve a certain splendor; it is a magnificent interpretation of a great modern town, with all her imperfections on her head, and all her glories too.

Let us examine this modern ode, the poet's latest word about Chicago, as "Hog-butcher of the world" was his earliest. The early poem had the forthright directness of a powerful etching done in a few bold lines. The second swings a big brushful of color, puts in background and foreground, light and shadow, shapes up a balanced

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

composition on a large canvas. We see "the lean hands of wagon men . . . shaping the junk of the earth to a new city," we see how "the junk stood up into skyscrapers." We hear the red men naming

The place of the skunk,
The river of the wild-onion smell,
Shee-caw-go.

And later the poet commands:

Lash yourself to the bastion of a bridge
And listen while the black cataracts of people go by, baggage, bundles,
balloons—listen while they jazz the classics.

And this is what we hear:

"Since when did you kiss yourself in?
And who do you think you are?
Come across, kick in, loosen up.
Where do you get that chatter?"

"Beat up the short-change artists—
They never did nothin' for you.
How do you get that way?—
Tell me and I'll tell the world.
I'll say so, I'll say it is."

"You're trying to crab my act.
You poor fish, you mackerel,
You ain't got the sense God
Gave an oyster—it's raining—
What you want is an umbrella."

.

"Hush baby,
It ain't how old you are,
It's how old you look,

His Home Town

It ain't what you got,
It's what you can get away with."

.

"Tell 'em, honey.
Ain't it the truth, sweetheart?
Watch your step.
You said it.
You said a mouthful.
We're all a lot of damn fourflushers."

.

The American temperament is there—American good-humor joshing itself in a slouching march-movement of slang.

We feel a big poet-spirit going along with the founding of the city and the lifting up of "the living lighted skyscrapers," going along with all the man-size jobs that changed a few huts on a marsh into a great modern town; and there is a large broom-sweeping irony for the comfortable people who profit by these labors in their smoothly ordered lives, and for the superior people who criticize the results:

It is easy to listen to the haberdasher customers hand each other their easy chatter—it is easy to die alive, to register a living thumb-print and be dead from the neck up.

.

It is easy to come here a stranger and show the whole works, write a book, fix it all up—it is easy to come and go away a muddle-headed pig, a bum and a bag of wind.

And then the spirit of the city rises and shakes off these little encumbrances with a grin:

Chicago fished from its depths a text: "Independent as a hog on ice."

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

That grotesque old saying was as familiar as *Yankee Doodle* in my childhood, for my father found it a beloved simile. Applied to Chicago, it is a true "text," in spite of the seeming sensitiveness of local pride. And like other grotesques flirting for an instant their rags of scarlet, it trails the purple shadow of tragedy:

Forgive us if the monotonous houses go mile on mile
Along monotonous streets out to the prairies;
If the faces of the houses mumble hard words
At the streets, and the street voices only say:
"Dust and a bitter wind shall come."
Forgive us if . . .

There are many *ifs*, especially:

Forgive us if we work so hard,
And the muscles bunch clumsy on us,
And we never know why we work so hard—
If the big houses with little families
And the little houses with big families
Sneer at each other's bars of misunderstanding;
Pity us when we shackle and kill each other,
And believe at first we understand,
And later say we wonder why.

And out of it all—beauty; beauty beaten out of the innumerable desperate dreamful shifts of change:

The library building named after Crerar, naked as a stock-farm silo,
light as a single eagle-feather, stripped like an airplane propeller,
takes a path up.

Two cool new rivets say, "Maybe it is morning"—"God knows."

Put the city up; tear the city down; put it up again; let us find a city.
Let us remember the little violet-eyed man who gave all, praying, "Dig
and dream, dream and hammer, till your city comes."

His Home Town

Every day the people sleep and the city dies; every day the people shake loose, awake and build the city again.

.....
"I will die as many times as you make me over again," says the city to the people.

So the poet goes on to "mention proud things"—there is a high pride throughout the poem, as well as the hog-on-ice independence of the man who cares not whether all the world decries and defames. Proud things such as:

The jack-knife bridge opening; the ore boats,
the wheat barges passing through.
Three overland trains arriving the same hour . . .
. . . a carload of shorthorns . . .

And the final section of the poem is an invocation to the winds, the city's fierce-breathing blessing and bane:

Winds of the Windy City,
Winds of corn and sea blue,
Spring wind white and fighting winter gray,
Come home here—they nickname a city for you.

The winds of Chicago are in the poem—it has a big sweeping generous movement. It goes—and it goes forward.

Washington Monument by Night is one of its author's finest lyrics—and that is saying a great deal. *At the Gates of Tombs* has something of the big sad grotesque humor we remember in *Losers*; and we linger a minute with *Primer Lesson* and the closing lines of *Harsk, harsk*. But the rest of the book seems loosely put together. The unknown soldier poem, *And So Today*, says nothing

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

new or in a new manner; surely there was a subject here, but this serves up what we all read in the newspapers. As for the title-poem, in the second section it succeeds at first in suggesting something of the exalted but flabbergasting bewilderment—as of a man knocked cold by sublimity—which overwhelms many a tourist at his first view of the Grand Canyon of Arizona. The interview with God, and the summing-up of man's absurd incompetence, are not bad—through their rough-and-tumble humor one feels the deeper inexpressible emotion. But the mood thins out, lifting again for only the final lyric, which is fine.

Perhaps Mr. Sandburg hasn't stayed long enough as yet in the sun-burnt Far West. He doesn't feel it as deeply as he does his own Windy City. *H. M.*

MURIEL STUART

The Cockpit of Idols, by Muriel Stuart. Methuen & Co., Ltd., London.

Courage and passion blow out the structure of these poems. The initial idea is slight, as in the heartrending tale of war, *It's Rose-time Here*; and sometimes fantastic, as in *The Centaur's Love*; but always it is handled with sureness, with a high fearlessness, and passion is always there sweeping each poem along, farther and farther away from the commonplace. There is never any sentimentality; even with such a subject as *The Bastard* Miss Stuart manages to keep gloriously free of this customary fem-

inine weakness. This poem, like most of the others, is too long to quote in its entirety:

Here thou art safe as roses in the bud,
Safe from the wind that will not spare the rose;
Here thou art daily and divinely fed
On holy wine and bread
That none deny—my body and my blood.
I house thee, myself the sacrament;
And I am great with thee, as souls with God.

Lie still awhile; thy beauty builds my shame—
The shame thou dost so innocently bring:
At thy beseeching blood my blood grows tame;
Thy body makes my own most wearisome,
And with thy kindling lips my lips become
Colder; within me something daily dies.
Yet oh, most sweet, I do not quarrel thee,
For more desired thou art than chastity;
Closer thou art than eyelids over eyes,
Than kissing lips or clasping hands can be;
As flame with flame, as tide with tide thou art;
Nearer, much nearer, than myself to me:
I carry Heaven beneath my laboring heart.

In *The Cockpit of Idols*, a young priest converses with a harlot—a melodramatic theme, yet it justifies itself, because here again Miss Stuart is sure in her treatment and unfaltering in her courage. And the inevitable and obvious end, when the priest says:

I walked with God in every noisy street,
And saw in every creature that passed by
Christ go forth too and mingle with the crowd . . .

though weak, is forgiven, because of such lines as:

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

In the dim church the warm deep-bosomed air
Swelled on remembered music, whose last note
Yearned in the organ's throat.

The shorter poems are like charming asides, which are not unusual, but linger because of the directness of their appeal. For instance, *Common Fires*:

The fern and flame had fought and died together,
From fading front the failing smoke crept grey;
The heath drew close her old brown shawl of heather,
And turned her face away.

Today the bee no bell of honey misses,
The birds are nesting where the bracken lies
Green, tranquil, deep, quiet as dreams or kisses
On weary lips and eyes.

The heath has drawn the blackened threads together,
My heart has closed her lips upon old pain,
But somewhere, in my heart and in the heather,
No bud shall grow again.

Marion Strobel

TRANQUIL TUNES

Cross-currents, by Margaret Widdemer. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

A pleasant and well-mannered collection, which has what might be termed a stage presence; for the fundamental idea of each poem—and all of them have an idea, though seldom a very original one—is put across with authority. Miss Widdemer is no novice. Her ear is keenly attuned to the popular taste; sometimes too keenly attuned, for occasionally she overdoes her effort to please,

Tranquil Tunes

and her verses become as conventionally sentimental as the *Blue Danube* waltz. It is as though she shouted to her audience: "Stay with me. I have pleased you—I can please you still more!" And as a proof of it she offers *Wisdom*:

I wonder, was it well
That you should lift your hand
And call me from the withered ring
I thought was fairyland?
For where I heard the pipes and flutes
Now I can only hear
A little sad wind blowing,
A little wind of fear.
And where I saw wild banners wing
Gold-purple in the sky
I see the world where sorry folk
With heavy hearts go by. . . .
Oh, it is true, is true—
But oh, the cruel hand
That called me from the withered ring
I thought was Fairyland!

However, though there are several poems as mild as the above, and though we look in vain for unusual wording, or rhythm, or for an arresting simile, nevertheless the poems have a charm of simplicity. They are clear-cut. An emotion, though at times a superficial one, is there. And in a number of instances, most of which are to be found under the subdivision *About Living*, there is delicacy of feeling, knowledge of life, and sweetness without sentimentality. For instance, *Liberation*:

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

I used to think I mattered so
That when I laughed and when I cried
The sun and stars would turn to know
If what I asked for was denied;
I did not know of this my pride,
Nor how my thoughts with stars were strung . . .
Such stately dreams God lets us ride
When we are innocent and young.
Instead of dancing down my spring
Oh, I went grave and watchfully—
They seemed so very great a thing,
My ways to Life and hers to me. . . .
How good it is to go so free,
To let all stars and sceptres fall!
For nothing matters now to me,
Who do not matter now at all.

Miss Widdemer speaks many times of God and Heaven, two words which do not appear often in modern poetry. And her belief that "He is so serviceable and so kind" is, in itself, refreshing, and an interesting contrast to the popular pagan cry.
Marion Strobel

ONE POET SPEAKS FOR HIMSELF

The Magpie's Shadow, by Yvor Winters. Musterbook-house, Chicago.

Yvor Winters is one of the rare American poets who are active critically, and whose theories are not laid by during the creative process. With him art is sacrosanct; therefore, he says, let us discover the nature of this art. His first book, *The Immobile Wind*, was an inquiry and an answer. The elementary thought, what Croce calls

One Poet Speaks for Himself

the "intuition," forms, unforms, and re-forms itself like protoplasm. Ultimately it assumes a conclusive shape. However, no matter what the terms into which it has been translated, the elementary thought will still be sensed as a nucleus. Form is indigenous, although certain formal habits may accrue. Thus one finds in the same small book a poem as dry and sparse metrically as *Hawk's Eye*, and another, *Death Goes Before Me*, transforming the English language, by attention to harmony of vowel-pitch, into a medium as fluent as that employed by Verlaine. *The Magpie's Shadow* is pre-figured by lines like these from poems in *The Immobile Wind*:

Far whispers creeping through an ancient shell.

Life is in lichens
That sleep as they run.

And if men pass
They pass like birds
With necks craning aside.

Stillness is like the beating of a drum.

A disillusionment which knows science and discounts reality universalized through the emotions. I have found Vico quoted as saying: "Metaphysics lifts itself above the universals; the poetical faculty must plunge itself in particulars." Yvor Winters does both, forcing the first into coherence by means of the second.

Of *The Magpie's Shadow* there is little to say. It has violent friends and violent antagonists who argue viciously

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

and futilely with "I like" and "I don't like." For myself, when I find in twenty-eight six-syllable poems not only a complete seasonal cycle but such a cycle with both individual and universal implications, "I like." Here is one of them, *No Being*:

I, bent. Thin nights receding.

It is impossible to classify this poetry, which is so new to us. It is as fundamental and economical as a primitive (I am thinking of certain Chippewa poems), and at the same time, with its surgically conscious introspectiveness, distinctly modern. One might say, impressionism; one might say, symbolism. It includes both and more.

Spring Rain My door-frame smells of leaves.

Fields I did not pick
 a flower.

Alone I saw day's shadow strike.

I should say Mr. Winters speaks for himself.

Pearl Andelson

TEACHER AND CRITIC

On English Poetry, by Robert Graves. Alfred A. Knopf.

There is an abundance of books which analyze poetry, and of books which tell how to write poetry. Since Poe, however, few poets have explained how they write. Robert Graves does this and does it well. He gives concrete examples from his own experience as a poet, and

discusses the subjective experiences which he holds are the bases of a number of well-known poems not of his own composition.

At the same time this is no mere textbook on the writing of verse. The author treats of the fundamental subjective basis for poetry. He adopts largely the theory of Dr. Freud, with which I believe most practicing poets will agree. This, in brief, is his explanation:

The poet, consciously or unconsciously, is always either taking in or giving out; he hears, observes, weighs, guesses, condenses, idealizes, and the new ideas troop quietly into his mind until suddenly every now and again two of them violently quarrel and drag into the fight a group of other ideas that have been loitering about at the back of his mind for years. There is great excitement, noise and bloodshed; with finally a reconciliation and drinks all around. The poet writes a tactful police-report on the affair, and there is the poem.

The book contains also comments on a wide variety of subjects related to poetry, ranging from the poet's dress to details of cross-rhythm and resolution. The remarks are of varying merit—the discussion of *vers libre*, for example, is inconsequential; but Mr. Graves makes no claim to utterance *ex cathedra*.

This is one of the few works on English verse that possess any magic of style. In this respect it deserves a place in the honorable succession represented by Sidney, Shelley, Poe, and Eastman. Indeed, the style is one of the chief charms of the book. The fanciful humor, the aphoristic satire, and the quiet whimsicality which are present in Mr. Graves' poems are evident to an even

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

greater extent in this prose volume. Never does he commit the common fault of the critic—taking himself too seriously.
Nelson Antrim Crawford

ASIA

Early Persian Poetry, by A. J. Williams Jackson. Macmillan Co.

Selections from the Rubaiyat of Hafiz, translated by a member of the Persia Society of London. John Lane.

Chips of Jade and Betel Nuts, translated by Arthur Guiterman. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The Garden of Bright Waters, and *Colored Stars*, by Edward Powys Mathers. Houghton Mifflin Co.

China and Japan, their literature and their art, have had of late a renaissance within another renaissance—that of our own art and literature. Discussions and imitations of Chinese and Japanese poetry have inundated the poetry magazines and publishers; and some modern poets go so far as to tell the vers-librists that they should all write like the Japanese of old, or bosh to that effect. Although the discussions and imitations bore us, we stand in awe at the portentous spectacle that artistic Asia offers.

This portentous spectacle would be made more magnificent by the advent of two little books by E. Powys Mathers, would-be translations of folk-songs and ancient and modern poems of Asia, love songs mostly, if . . . there is an if: if said poems and songs were actually of ancient and modern Asia, and not, as some scholars

assure us, more or less faked. But Mr. Mathers is not just a faker, he is a poet, as the following, whether a translation or not, bears witness:

I thought it was snowing
Flowers; but it was this young lady
Coming towards me.

These two books, bearing such lovely titles, are full of such poems as that. *Colored Stars*, being the shorter, is the better book.

A laudatory word should be due to every person who gives us a glimpse of the art of Asia. But sometimes this glimpse is so perverted, as in the case of the Hafiz selections and the translations we find in *Early Persian Poetry*, that our thanks are given grudgingly if at all. This member of the Persian Society of London, translator of Hafiz—his being unnamed is probably an apology—ought to have had one good friend to tell him to keep his hands off Hafiz; said friend would have proved a good friend of Hafiz also. This turban-and-slippers, ancient and venerable Turk, who, they assure us, is as great as Dante, is made up by the member of the Persia Society of London to look like the Sweet Singer of Michigan. And all this because the translator has taken it upon himself to render in rhyme the Rubaiyat of Hafiz; rhyme being one too many for him. Possibly he would have done a better job had he undertaken to translate Hafiz literally, and in prose. The effort wasted in frantically fishing for the rhyme might have been turned to better

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

use in a search for the right word. But who knows?—it might have turned out something like Mark Twain's translation of his own *Jumping Frog* from the French. It's no use. Mere scribblers ought to leave, the poets of other nations alone, they ought to let dead poets sleep the sleep of the just in their cool tombs. Only a poet, and a good one, may translate adequately the work of another poet. It is this fact that makes works of art of Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Baudelaire's translations of Poe's tales, etc.

We make the same complaint concerning *Chips of Jade and Betel Nuts*, except that the rhymed translations by Arthur Guiterman are graceful and attractive:

Oh, when the Whale lies floundering in the Shoal
How all the Minnows laugh to see him roll!

But who knows whether the originals were merely graceful and pretty, or sheer funny, as some of these proverbs of China and India are? Who knows how much of the spirit of majestic Hindu and Chinese proverbs, how much of the mysticism of them, was lost in this graceful and pretty handling, which inevitably makes the proverbs petty and levels them all?

Early Persian Poetry is interesting as a book of history. But if we must consider the translations included as fair examples of the work of these Persian poets we must perforce reach the conclusion that they are a race of drivellers and doggerel-makers; which cannot, of course, be true.

Emanuel Carnevali

NOTES

Mr. Ezra Pound announces the formation of a group called the Bel Esprit, to consist of thirty or more persons who will have the high privilege of contributing fifty dollars each a year toward the support of some literary artist, in order that this artist may have enough leisure and freedom from care to devote himself to his art.

The first beneficiary of the fund so contributed is to be T. S. Eliot, whose work in Lloyd's Bank has been exhausting not only to his art but to his health as well. A three-months' rest last winter was insufficient to restore him, as anyone with jangled nerves would know; and work in a bank is at best hardly conducive to intimate service of the muse.

About ten more subscribers are needed in the Bel Esprit. If any of POETRY's readers should care to join this group, the editor will be glad to forward his name, or money, or both, to the committee in charge. It is understood, but not precisely stated, that the beneficiaries of the Bel Esprit are to be Americans, as this country, unlike England, bestows no literary pensions.

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Laura Sherry (Mrs. Edward P.), of Milwaukee, Wis., has been for some years director of the Wisconsin Players, an organization which has been prominent in the "little theatre" movement, and has published two or three volumes of plays.

Mr. Yvor Winters, formerly of Chicago, but now a resident of Santa Fe, N. M., is the author of *The Immobile Wind*, (Monroe Wheeler) and of *The Magpie's Shadow* (Musterbookhouse) reviewed in this number.

Miss Emmy Veronica Sanders, now sojourning in Italy, is a cosmopolite, born in Amsterdam, who has lived in many countries and has published essays, poems, etc., in a number of languages. She now swears allegiance, however, to English.

Leonora Speyer (Mrs. Edgar Speyer), of New York, is the author of *A Canopic Jar* (E. P. Dutton & Co.). Poetry is a recent discovery with Mrs. Speyer; as a girl she was a violinist of high repute.

Mr. Edward Sapir, a graduate of Columbia, is now a resident of Ottawa, being employed in the Geological Survey of Canada.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Mr. Louis Grudin, of New York, hopes to publish this fall his first book of verse, *Charlatan*.

Miss Iris Barry is a young English poet.

The other three poets appear here for the first time.

Mr. Arthur H. Nethercot, of Evanston, Ill., has been of late in the English department of Northwestern University, and president of its Poetry Club.

Sally Bruce Kinsolving (Mrs. A. B.), of Baltimore, is the author of *Depths and Shallows*; also of *David and Bathsheba*, a play and lyrics, to be offered this autumn by the same publishers, the Norman Remington Co.

Mr. Leon Herald is a young poet of Milwaukee, Wis.

Mr. Aksel K. Bodholdt, a vice-president of the Central Trust Company of Illinois which is the custodian of POETRY's trust-fund, has kindly consented to serve on our Administrative Committee in the place made vacant by the untimely death of William T. Abbott. Mr. Abbott's long service to the magazine is gratefully recorded in the title-page section accompanying this number.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Fagots of Cedar, by Ivan Swift. Priv. pr'd, Harbor Springs, Mich.

Gedichte, by George Sylvester Viereck. Translated into German, Hesse & Becker, Leipzig, Germany.

Lute and Furrow, by Olive Tilford Dargan. Chas. Scribner's Sons.

Wood Notes, by Mildred Whitney Stillman. Duffield & Co.

In Colors of the West, by Glenn Ward Dresbach. Henry Holt & Co.

The Old-Time 4th of July, by Ignatius Brennan. Privately printed, Wheeling, W. Va.

ANTHOLOGIES, PARODIES AND PLAYS:

The Choice of the Crowd, by Charles J. Finger. Privately printed, Fayetteville, Ark.

Companions. Published by Samuel A. Jacobs, New York.

Heavens, by Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Red-bud Women, by Mark O'Dea. Stewart Kidd Co., Cincinnati.

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*Ford Madox Hueffer in the New York
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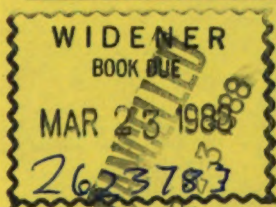
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